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Letter from the Publisher

Coaches Gone Wild is the title of the lead feature in our regional issues this year. Dennis Dodd takes an insider's look at the trials and tribulations of several of the game's top coaches beginning on page 18.

Scoping the Nation beginning on page 44 — written by *Lindy's* senior editor Anthony Gimino — tells you about all the coaching changes in college football this year. Anthony also tells who is on the proverbial "hot seat" on page 23.

Lindy's added a new Mountain West Preview last year and this year has added preseason team issues for Alabama, Michigan, Notre Dame, Ohio State and Texas. You can order them from our website or they will be on the newsstands in those respective states.

Lindy's will also be launching a new and improved website on Aug. 1st of this year. It will feature daily updates and great information to enhance the *Lindy's* brand online. We hope you check it out!

I hope your favorite team has a terrific year. As always, your comments are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lindy Davis Jr.

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NATIONAL PICKS

Ready to Stick the Landing

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1. LSU

LSU did everything except stick the landing last season. The Tigers, kings of the comebacks and lords of one of the finest college football seasons ever for 13 games, had to swallow a goose-egg omelet, eagerly fed by league rival Alabama. Too bad it was in the BCS Championship Game.

Talk about all the motivation they need for this season. "Fire back" mode describes LSU perfectly after the sting of the title game.

No one doubts the Tigers' ammunition. The big boys on both sides of the line are nasty and among the nation's finest — the best way to be when setting out to hunt down the national championship. Size, speed and athleticism fill the roster — just your typical SEC championship team — plus these Tigers are led by a Honey Badger loaded for bear.

THE GOOD NEWS: LSU has a quarterback. Zach Mettenberger, who began his career at Georgia before being dismissed for legal issues, will do what Jordan Jefferson couldn't in the national title game: Stand and deliver. Coach Les Miles won't veer from loving on his punishing ground game — a four-headed backfield is a year older and better — but Mettenberger creates the needed balance. CB Tyrann Mathieu returns to make plays everywhere all the time, while defensive ends Sam Montgomery and Barkevious Mingo are lightning bolts off the edge and can't be successfully double-teamed at once.

THE BAD NEWS: The Tigers lost Thorpe Award-Winning cornerback Morris Claiborne early to the NFL Draft, and receiver Rueben Randle and defensive tackle Michael Brockers also took an early train out of Baton Rouge. LSU fans don't want to think too hard about who's next if Mettenberger goes down ... or just isn't up to the task. As with last year, the Tigers will have to earn every inch of their No. 1 ranking with road games at Auburn, Florida, Texas A&M and Arkansas.

OUR CALL: It's insanity to bet against the SEC winning its seventh consecutive national title. LSU gets Alabama in Baton Rouge for what should be the defining game of the college season. No team in the country looks better in its uniforms than LSU, and this time when the Tigers run out the clock at the end of the season, it will be to celebrate their third national championship in 10 years.

2. USC

Talented roster returns to glory

Matt Barkley confounded the draftniks and disappointed the rest of the Pac-12 by staying for his senior season, just like Matt Leinart did for the Trojans in 2005. Coach Lane Kiffin will forever be in Barkley's debt as the 37-year-old coach now sees his career really taking off after whatever that was with the Oakland Raiders, a false start at Tennessee, and two years of a postseason ban at USC.

THE GOOD NEWS: Barkley has the best receiver in the country in Robert Woods, and if Woods isn't No. 1, Marqise Lee might be. Multiple All-Americans dot the lineup, just like the Pete Carroll days. USC gets Oregon in the L.A. Coliseum, probably twice (once in the regular season, once in Pac-12 title game).

THE BAD NEWS: USC has 10 fewer scholarship players than most teams, capped at 75 this season as NCAA sanctions kick in. Depth is a concern virtually everywhere and trucking through to a 13-0 haul will require injury blessings from the football gods.

OUR CALL: The Trojans re-turned a corner last season by winning at Oregon in mid-November and are hitting the accelerator back to the glory days. The offense will be flat-out unstoppable ... a nice contrast, wouldn't you say, to LSU's defense in January?

3. Alabama

Restocking ... repeating not out of the question

The easy way to get another national championship trophy is to spend $30,000 on a new Waterford crystal football to replace the one that was shattered when a player's parent accidentally knocked it off its perch in the spring. The hard way is to earn it on the field after losing half of your starters on offense and defense, including Heisman finalist running back Trent Richardson, while trying to steer through the swamps of the SEC West — and win in Baton Rouge.

THE GOOD NEWS: Alabama's offensive line is the best in the country; QB AJ McCarron manages the game beautifully; and another star (or two) will emerge at running back. Nick Saban has recruited and evaluated better than anyone in the past five years.

THE BAD NEWS: The Tide is still crazy-talented on defense, but it takes experience to run the defense as Saban wants, and that's what Alabama lacks in places. There's no telling when the next shank, yank, or worm-burner is going to come in the kicking game.

OUR CALL: The Tide will play hearty defense, run the ball, gain field position through special teams, and not turn it over. It will work. Again. We have them No. 3 ... so we're seeing only one L — at LSU.

4. Oklahoma

Bouncing back is Sooners' strong suit

It wasn't just the injuries. It wasn't just the late-season flameout. It wasn't just booting a chance at an eighth conference title in 13 seasons under Bob Stoops. It was that Oklahoma State capitalized on it all to win its first Big 12 championship. You can bet 2011 isn't sitting lightly in the OU craw. How do we know? Following seasons in which the Sooners haven't won a conference title under Stoops, they are 50-8.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Landry Jones, who slumped in the second half of the season, is recommitted, having spent part of spring practice studying under quarterback guru George Whitfield Jr. in California. Four offensive line starters return from a unit that gave up only 11 sacks on 583 throws.

THE BAD NEWS: Jones must thrive without WR Ryan Broyles, whose late-season injury was costly. Backup QB Blake "Belldozer" Bell is a Wildcat wild card, but how will that all play out? The defense, while talented, wasn't particularly physical last season.

OUR CALL: The record-setting Jones will rebound in a big way. So will RB Dominique Whaley, a walk-on who was poised to lead the team in rushing before being injured. A national title might be possible if OU can win at West Virginia and TCU in the final three weeks.

5. Oregon

Flying as high as a kite

The Ducks came out ahead in offseason transactions, with quarterback Darron Thomas making the dubious decision to leave early for the NFL, while coach Chip Kelly kept his feet on the ground in Eugene after flirting with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Replacing Thomas, while unexpected, is relatively easy — plug in Bryan Bennett or Marcus Mariota. Kelly is proving to be one of a kind, going 36-6 in three seasons with three conference titles and one national title game appearance.

THE GOOD NEWS: Running back Kenjon Barner is still fast. Running back/receiver/returner De'Anthony Thomas is a rocket booster in Nikes. Offense? No prob. Defense? Speedy. The non-conference schedule is easy-breezy and the Ducks should be walking on water all the way to 9-0 and a date at USC.

THE BAD NEWS: There's been a lot of, uh, smoke around the Oregon program with NCAA investigators snooping around over possible recruiting misdeeds and a spring ESPN report over alleged widespread marijuana use among the Ducks. Is this a program on the brink of very bad things?

OUR CALL: Who's going to beat these guys except for USC? Yeah, nobody. The Ducks have averaged 43 points per game under Kelly and continue to live in the fast lane.

6. Georgia

Big-time defense and big-time schedule

Coach Mark Richt distanced himself from the hot seat with a 10-game winning streak and an SEC East title last season. He's averaged 9.6 victories across 11 seasons in Athens, so any knocks on him mostly have to be chalked up to the hyperventilation of SEC fans. Richt will keep on keeping on (and, perhaps, then some) with QB Aaron Murray, plenty of playmakers, and a hulking, talented and veteran defense.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Dawgs won't dazzle with schemes on offense, but they do what they do well. If 2011 star recruit Isaiah Crowell doesn't stay durable and emerge as a star in the backfield, 2012 star recruit Keith Marshall will. Best news: No LSU, Alabama or Arkansas on the league schedule.

THE BAD NEWS: The offensive line lost three starters. The defense has to deal with multiple suspensions early in the season. The running game has to show up against physical teams (73 carries for 129 yards in season-ending losses to LSU and Michigan State).

OUR CALL: One SEC assistant coach told *Lindy's* that, "Georgia, to me, is the most talented defense in the league, no question." That's good enough for us to predict an East title and a close SEC championship game this time around.

7. Michigan

Sudden rise has Big Blue thinking bigger

Going 11-2 and winning the Sugar Bowl in his first season wiped away much of the frustration from the three-year Rich Rodriguez era, but it sure didn't do Brady Hoke any favors going forward. Any patience the Wolverines' faithful would have extended is gone now, given that smashing debut. Despite the record, he's still scrambling to cover some deficiencies in depth and talent. But if teams are going to make Michigan pay, they better hurry before Hoke's recruiting success takes hold.

THE GOOD NEWS: Michigan has a pair of 1,000-yard rushers in QB Denard Robinson and TB Fitzgerald Toussaint. Robinson says his comfort level running Al Borges' system for a second year is "day and night" from last year. That can't be good for opponents.

THE BAD NEWS: NT Mike Martin's departure alone would leave a gaping hole on the defensive line, but two other starters are gone from a unit that wasn't overly deep. Michigan has to shuffle up front, where defensive success starts ... or doesn't.

OUR CALL: Michigan opens against Alabama in Dallas and plays three of its first five away from Ann Arbor. The season-finale at Ohio State is no picnic, either, but the Wolverines should be able to outscore a lot of their problems.

8. FLORIDA STATE

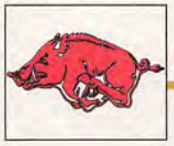
'Noles entering now-or-never territory

Waiting for the tide to rise again after repeated epic recruiting hauls, Florida State has needed only ankle waders under Jimbo Fisher. The promise of a return to prominence has seemed realistic; there are enough blue-chip recruits on the roster that last season's 9-4 record can be classified as an unmitigated disappointment. The potential of Signing Day can only carry a coach so far; it's time for Fisher to change the discussion back to championships. We're thinking 11 wins should do it.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Seminoles should have a guillotine of a defense with speed and explosiveness at every level of that unit. QB EJ Manuel is electric and could be a difference-maker if he adds consistency.

THE BAD NEWS: Offensive line — namely left tackle, where DT convert Cameron Ewing could start — is unsettled. The personnel turnover on special teams rates as a chief worry for a team with a woeful recent history in close games (three losses by five points or less last season).

OUR CALL: Manuel need not be a Heisman Trophy candidate. He just needs to let the weapons around him work for him and count on a cutthroat defense to be the team's meal ticket to the BCS.



9. Arkansas

Which way, Hogs? Tough to say

Arkansas built a bridge to 2013 by bringing back popular assistant coach John L. Smith on a 10-month contract, but there still could be troubled water below the wake of Bobby Petrino's career face-plant. This looked to be *the* year for the Hogs, but how should we recalibrate expectations with an interim head coach? Will this be a more fragile team? Or could this be a rally-around-the-campfire moment? Hard to say.

THE GOOD NEWS: Offensive coordinator Paul Petrino ranked senior QB Tyler Wilson just a step below Superman this spring. No one argued. The Hogs have all manner of Saturday superheroes, including RB Knile Davis, who should be back to 2010 form after 2011's ankle injury.

THE BAD NEWS: Arkansas' defense is good, but doesn't rank with the SEC elite; consider that the Razorbacks allowed a combined 79 points in losses to LSU and Alabama last season. And Auburn fans happily remember the 65 the Tigers plastered on the Hogs in 2010.

OUR CALL: We like the hiring of Smith, who will retain the meeting of the minds between the players and coaches. But the Hogs have hit the SEC West glass ceiling, not breaking through, even with home games vs. LSU and 'Bama.

10. WEST VIRGINIA

Mountaineers Have Muscle to Take Big 12

Leaving the Big East for the Big 12 is not a lateral move, rather a major jump in class based on the offense and NFL-caliber talent on the other sideline every week. Second-year head coach Dana Holgorsen, formerly the coordinator at Oklahoma State, knows his offense works here. Whether the defense gets enough traction with its new-look 3-4 against the likes of Oklahoma and TCU is the great unknown entering 2012.

THE GOOD NEWS: Holgorsen can coach quarterbacks. Geno Smith leads an elite offense that attacks vertically, horizontally and everyplace in between. The Mountaineers have speed from marquee skill guys that go three deep at halfback, plus two 1,000-yard receivers — Tavon Austin and Stedman Bailey.

THE BAD NEWS: WVU goes from a league dotted with dormant offenses to the OK Corral that is the Big 12. The Mountaineers could really use DE/LB Bruce Irvin, who became a first-round 2012 draft pick. Coaches called the revamped 3-4 scheme a work in progress in the spring.

OUR CALL: Unlike the Big East, October and November in the Big 12 bring few breathers, but it looks as if the Mountaineers are conditioned to be marathon runners, as well as sprinters.

11. South Carolina

Poised for a run at East title

It only took 20 years, but South Carolina looks like an honest-to-goodness SEC program, built on first-round defensive talent, a punishing ground game, and one of the best coaches money can buy. You can make the case that no coach in the SEC has squeezed more out of his talent the past few years than Steve Spurrier, especially last season when he reversed course at quarterback and lost his star running back at midseason ... and still won a school-record 11 games.

THE GOOD NEWS: RB Marcus Lattimore is back from injury to plow even the stoutest of defenses. Dual-threat QB Connor Shaw could offer, at long last, the stability needed at the position. The only better pair of DEs (Jadeveon Clowney, Devin Taylor) is at LSU. Maybe.

THE BAD NEWS: The architect of the defense, coordinator Ellis Johnson, is gone, taking over as the boss at Southern Miss. A playmaker on each side of the ball — WR Alshon Jeffery and CB Stephon Gilmore — left early for the NFL. Gamecocks have to play LSU and Arkansas; East rival Georgia does not.

OUR CALL: The Gamecocks haven't lost in the past two years to annual rivals Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and Clemson. Maybe only the Dawgs get them this season.

12. Michigan State

Young, talented, and making titles a habit

The return of 17 starters, only five of whom are seniors, suggests more success is on the way after coach Mark Dantonio guided MSU to consecutive 11-win seasons, including a share of the Big Ten title in 2010 and a Legends Division crown last year. More such good times should lie ahead, given the talent and experience Dantonio has returning. We'll know early one way or another, as Sparty takes on Boise State, Notre Dame and Ohio State — all at home — before the end of September.

THE GOOD NEWS: Four starters on the offensive line and tandem tailbacks Le'Veon Bell and Edwin Baker give MSU a chance to break in new quarterback Andrew Maxwell and an inexperienced receiving corps through a tough early schedule.

THE BAD NEWS: Maxwell seemed ready to take over for three-year starter Kirk Cousins, but a sprained knee knocked him out of the last half of spring practice. That didn't help him build a rapport with a receiving group that must replace B.J. Cunningham and Keshawn Martin.

OUR CALL: The Spartans are salty on defense, led by rush end William Gholston, and have a run game built for Big Ten success. That's got to be worth at least nine regular-season wins.

13. CLEMSON

Tigers look to get tougher on D

Set aside the perspiration on coach Dabo Swinney's brow over the prospect of replacing three starting offensive linemen and focus on what he cares about most — defense. Former Oklahoma coordinator Brent Venables was brought in to help Clemson not just repeat as conference champions, but to become a wrecking-ball group akin to the edgy Sooners' defenses of yesteryear. That defense will be tested every day in practice by better skill players than it will see on Saturdays.

THE GOOD NEWS: There aren't many offensive trios better than this dynamic group — QB Tajh Boyd, superstar WR Sammy Watkins and 1,000-yard rusher Andre Ellington. In the second half of the season, all the pedestal games are in Death Valley — Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech, NC State, South Carolina.

THE BAD NEWS: The Tigers must delete any recall of the 70-33 whipping from West Virginia in what became the Orange Crush Bowl, as well as the lopsided losses at NC State and South Carolina in back-to-back games in November.

OUR CALL: Clemson's talent level rates with the elite in the conference. That's nothing new. But the defense has to improve for the Tigers to be more than just a fun team to watch.

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14. Ohio State

Meyer's arrival has Buckeyes smiling

Urban Meyer's return to the sideline and to OSU, where he started his career as a graduate assistant coach in the 1980s, immediately erased the lingering bitterness among those too thick to understand that Jim Tressel's lies to the NCAA and to his own school couldn't be tolerated. Buckeye fans are all-in with Meyer, whose pursuit of a third BCS title ring must wait until the expiration of a one-year bowl ban left by Tressel.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sophomore QB Braxton Miller gives Meyer a piece of clay perfectly tailored to run the offense that Alex Smith and Tim Tebow rode to fame. DE John Simon's rejection of an early entry into the NFL also provides a fulcrum on which to build the defense.

THE BAD NEWS: OSU finished 115th nationally in passing a year ago and returns no receiver with more than 14 catches. The linebackers were underachieving in 2011, which is one reason OSU struggled to its first losing season since 1999.

OUR CALL: A friendly schedule and the euphoria over Meyer's arrival should work for a nice bounce-back from OSU's 6-7 finish. If the Buckeyes can add some element of the pass, and Miller can stay healthy, a 10-win season isn't far-fetched.

15. TCU

Move up to the Big 12 offers big opportunities

A new stadium, a new conference, a new outlook. All of it can't come fast enough after an offseason drug scandal that resulted in the arrest of four players for alleged dealing. As the most overachieving non-automatic qualifier of the BCS era, the Horned Frogs know the schedule is getting tougher in the Big 12, but they're ready. TCU specializes in slaying bigger, badder opponents ... and it gets Oklahoma at home.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB Casey Pachall made them forget Andy Dalton real quick-like. Throwing for 473 yards in a win at Boise State will do that. The backfield is set: Ed Wesley, Matthew Tucker and Waymon James combined for 2,100 yards. DE Stansly Maponga has All-America talent.

THE BAD NEWS: Strangely, Gary Patterson must revamp the defense. A unit that finished No. 1 in total D three years running slumped to 32nd last season. TCU will face five of 2011's top 15 offenses playing in the Big 12. LB Tanner Brock, one of those arrested, is the biggest loss from the drug busts.

OUR CALL: Patterson's 4-2-5 stack defense gets the toughest season-long test of his TCU career. Playing at Oklahoma State and West Virginia in back-to-back games will be the difference in the season. Ten wins aren't out of the question.

16. Oklahoma State

Gundy has Cowboys maturing into a real power

How do you follow the best season in school history? Coach 'em up. Part of the story of Oklahoma State's near-BCS title game season was the maturation of coach Mike Gundy. The Eddie Robinson National Coach of the Year also cashed in on a lot of T. Boone Pickens' cash, so Oklahoma State isn't going away as Gundy enters the prime of his career as a recruiter, play-caller, and coach. The Cowboys are no longer Texas and Oklahoma's little brother.

THE GOOD NEWS: RB Joseph Randle was overshadowed by the axis of Brandon Weeden and Justin Blackmon, but only Barry Sanders scored more TDs in a single Oklahoma State season. The Pokes are going to be more of a running team, which will be fine.

THE BAD NEWS: The quarterback position looks bare. Is that too harsh? Only one QB on the roster has thrown a pass in a college game. The winner at the end of the spring was true freshman Wes Lunt, who won't have the top two WRs from last year.

OUR CALL: Gundy has proven himself. The pipeline is rolling at Stillwater, and as long as Texas is on the rebound, consider Oklahoma State the second-best program in the Big 12.

17. Wisconsin

Major roster turnover doesn't dim hopes

Consecutive trips to the Rose Bowl and a resulting pair of excruciatingly close losses have ratcheted up the hunger for a BCS bowl win. Ohio State's one-year bowl ban will only help Bret Bielema coach his team back to the league championship game in Indianapolis and continue its recent dominance of the conference, as he sticks with what works: Running the same off-tackle play over and over.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Badgers will try to duplicate Russell Wilson's success in his lone year after transferring from North Carolina State by opening their arms to Maryland transfer Danny O'Brien. The 2010 ACC Newcomer of the Year will arrive in time for fall camp and to take over under center.

THE BAD NEWS: Bielema might need name tags to recognize the new coaches. Only three holdovers return from last season. The Badgers' 10 returning starters are also the fewest number of any team in the Big Ten.

OUR CALL: It's impossible to overlook a team planning to play Montee Ball and James White together in the backfield, given their combined 4,700 rushing yards the past two years. Wisconsin can ground and pound its way to the Big Ten title game if O'Brien makes a relatively smooth transition.

18. Virginia Tech

Supremely talented Thomas leads youthful Hokies

Junior QB Logan Thomas, as naturally gifted as they come with his defensive end body type (6-6, 262), can do a little bit of everything. He has electrifying ability and should elevate the offense in critical junctures until the supporting cast can be identified. The Hokies enter the season with a depth chart pocked with inexperience around Thomas; four offensive linemen, RB David Wilson, two wideouts and lead tight end were replaced from the 2011 group.

THE GOOD NEWS: Nine starters return from the Hokies' seventh-ranked defense, including the entire front seven, and depth everywhere. They're equipped to face almost any scheme and avoid mismatches. D-linemen James Gayle and Luther Maddy are game-changers.

THE BAD NEWS: The schedule is a minefield with five games against teams coming off of bye weeks and trips to Miami and Clemson. The Hokies almost always have a gem to carry the ball, but they enter the season unproven there and on the offensive line.

OUR CALL: Frank Beamer's postseason record has fallen into a 1-for-5 slump since 2004. But Thomas and a salty Bud Foster defense will tee up another good opportunity.

19. TEXAS

From back-of-pack to return of the Mack?

Texas was 8-5 in 2011, a respectable rebound from a losing 2010 season, but the Longhorns were outclassed by Oklahoma State, Baylor and OU in a season in which coach Mack Brown never found that easy-chair level of comfort he's been accustomed to. With a more seasoned roster and relative stability at quarterback, the Longhorns are contenders because they've rediscovered trademark strengths — big, powerful and deep along the offensive line and nasty on defense.

THE GOOD NEWS: QB David Ash is well ahead of Case McCoy at quarterback; plentiful options are available at running back and Ash can lean on big-play speed at receiver. Defensive coordinator Manny Diaz has a better feel for his personnel — and vice versa — in Year Two.

THE BAD NEWS: Depth thinner than a tortilla on defense could be problematic, and the difference between eight and 10 wins likely rides on the impact of the 2012 recruiting class. Brown's summertime stress might come from a kicking game that looked shaky in spring drills.

OUR CALL: UT doesn't need the next Vince Young or Colt McCoy. But if Ash is a capable manager, the Longhorns will survive tough times — like a three-game stretch against OSU, West Virginia and Oklahoma.

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20. Florida

If the QB position settles down ...

A 7-6 record won't earn Will Muschamp many celebratory chomps in The Swamp. Gainesville expects championships, not fringe bowl bids. To restore Florida atop the SEC pecking order, the defense-fueled coach has to figure out the offense. Which is to say: UF can't catch Alabama and LSU unless sophomore QBs Jacoby Brissett and Jeff Driskel exceed expectations. "I'm not really looking for style points. I'm looking for production," Muschamp said.

THE GOOD NEWS: Florida has a veteran defense and a stellar kicking game. A deep and talented stable of running backs led by Mike Gillislee can carry the offense until the quarterbacks get comfortable. New offensive coordinator Brent Pease wants a pedal-to-metal attack that keeps opponents guessing.

THE BAD NEWS: The defense suffered a blow with the torn ACL of junior DE Ronald Powell, but the Gators are hopeful he will return by October. LSU and Alabama don't fire blanks, and there's no guarding against shellshock for the fresh meat under center.

OUR CALL: Muschamp needs more fireworks to give the people what they come to see. The spring signs were mostly positive, but if one or both quarterbacks prove to be duds, Florida's title chances go up in smoke. Florida remains a rung (rungs?) below Alabama and LSU.

21. Stanford

Unlucky, but still dangerous

The two men most responsible for 31 victories over the past three seasons are gone — coach Jim Harbaugh left after the 2010 season, and two-time Heisman runner-up Andrew Luck became the first pick in the 2012 NFL Draft. David Shaw made a seamless transition last year to the head coach's headsets, retaining all of Harbaugh's brawny style on a campus known for brains. Luck has run out (OK, we can finally put those to rest), with sophomore Brett Nottingham or junior Josh Nunes poised to take over.

THE GOOD NEWS: Stanford was third nationally against the run last season, and that front seven, led by NT Terrence Stephens, DE Ben Gardner, LB Chase Thomas and LB Shayne Skov, is the team's strength. RB Stepfan Taylor fuels Stanford's tough-and-tricky rushing attack.

THE BAD NEWS: There is no getting around the drop-off at quarterback, which figures to result in more negative plays and pressure on the passing game, where the receivers are. ... Big-time OLs Jonathan Martin and David DeCastro are gone.

OUR CALL: Shaw signed the fifth-best class in the nation, according to Rivals.com, and this golden age of Stanford football isn't over. In 2012, the ground game and ferocious front seven keep Stanford relevant and dangerous.

22. Kansas State

Finding a way despite tiny margin for error

Doubt Bill Snyder at your own risk. At age 71, he's as savvy as ever. With a roster picked near the bottom of the Big 12 in 2011, he won 10 games. The Wildcats should have played in the Sugar Bowl. K-State is the anti-Big 12 in a league that is famous for its quarterbacks and offense. The Cats squeeze out enough offense (only 337 yards per game last year) and make enough big defensive plays to be pesky.

THE GOOD NEWS: A lot of folks considered QB Collin Klein the most valuable player in the country last year. Not the Heisman Trophy winner, just a guy who, if you took him off the roster, would be the difference between 10 wins and sitting at home during bowl season. LB Arthur Brown and CB Nigel Malone are rather studly.

THE BAD NEWS: The Wildcats probably need things to go just right. They won eight games last year by a touchdown or less. Klein is resilient, but if he is to stay upright, his protection must get better. Three starters are being replaced in the offensive line.

OUR CALL: Another 10-win season? Not quite. The secret to their success just might be pulling a repeat of 2011, when they were ninth in turnover margin.

23. LOUISVILLE

Best of a weak Big East good enough

Coach Charlie Strong knows respect is a reach given the recent collective product the Big East placed in the BCS, and he spent the offseason doing a Dangerfield act to Kentucky media, which he felt paid too much attention to the Final Four basketball team. Now that West Virginia calls the Big 12 home, Louisville has the muscle to win a conference title in Strong's third season with the core of the 2011 team back and QB Teddy Bridgewater leading a balanced offense.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Cardinals are loaded at running back, three sophomore wideouts bring big-play flair and Bridgewater, a sophomore, has all-league skills. Strong can't call enough blitzes and has the depth in the front seven to make that tempo work.

THE BAD NEWS: Louisville is again one of the youngest teams in the country after starting 11 true freshmen at some point last season. Another slow start is possible, especially if the O-line takes too much time to jell.

OUR CALL: The schedule reads like a queue of weak sisters. Don't expect the Cardinals to be relevant nationally — this *is* the Big East — but look for this to be a title season that trampolines Louisville into top 15 consideration in 2013.

24. Boise State

Adding a MWC trophy on their way out?

You gotta go with the odds — the Broncos have finished in the Associated Press Top 25 in eight of the past 10 years, and they would have been ranked in those other two seasons if they had made one more play in the final minute of bowl losses. This is, no doubt, a reloading year for the Program That Chris Petersen Will Never Leave, but it's a good time for a transition, with thorn-in-the-side TCU off to the Big 12 and Boise State revving the engines for the Big East in 2013.

THE GOOD NEWS: The last three seasons in which Boise State has used a first-time starting quarterback, the Broncos have gone 33-2, so let's not overstate the loss of Kellen Moore. (No pressure on you, junior Joe Southwick ... or whoever.) Broncos are good and deep at OL, WR and DB.

THE BAD NEWS: Boise State went 50-3 with Moore as the starting quarterback, so let's not minimize his departure. Standouts Tyrone Crawford, Shea McClellin and Billy Winn are gone from the defensive line, and Doug Martin leaves big shoes to fill at tailback.

OUR CALL: We'd expect one stumble somewhere after losing an opener at Michigan State, but that's it. Clear room in the trophy case for a MWC crown.

25. Nebraska

Tough schedule makes more wins unlikely

The Cornhuskers rooted around in their new conference last season, digging up a couple of highlights to go with three Big Ten losses. Anybody will take a win over Ohio State whenever they can get it, and knocking off Michigan State was a nice feather. The lopsided road losses to Wisconsin and Michigan were another matter. Nebraska knows what it has to do, but upward mobility depends on QB Taylor Martinez, whose spring footwork in the passing game was said to be much improved.

THE GOOD NEWS: Senior Rex Burkhead is one of the most reliable running backs in the country, and the Huskers have the depth to lighten his workload, if needed. Martinez has, at tantalizing times, looked like a Heisman candidate because of his superb running.

THE BAD NEWS: Nebraska's defense will miss the tackling of LB Lavonte David (133 stops) and the attitude of CB Alfonzo Dennard. The Big Ten scheduling misses are Indiana, Illinois and Purdue, expected to be among the league's worst teams.

OUR CALL: Nebraska went 9-4 last season and finished No. 24 in the AP poll after a Capital One Bowl loss to South Carolina. Sounds about right again this season.

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RATING THE TEAMS 1-124

1. LSU	SEC	1	6. Georgia	SEC	3	11. South Carolina	SEC	5	16. Oklahoma State	Big 12	4	21. Stanford	Pac-12	3
2. USC	Pac-12	1	7. Michigan	Big Ten	1	12. Michigan State	Big Ten	2	17. Wisconsin	Big Ten	4	22. Kansas State	Big 12	6
3. Alabama	SEC	2	8. Florida State	ACC	1	13. Clemson	ACC	2	18. Virginia Tech	ACC	3	23. Louisville	Big East	1
4. Oklahoma	Big 12	1	9. Arkansas	SEC	4	14. Ohio State	Big Ten	3	19. Texas	Big 12	5	24. Boise State	MWC	1
5. Oregon	Pac-12	2	10. West Virginia	Big 12	2	15. TCU	Big 12	3	20. Florida	SEC	6	25. Nebraska	Big Ten	5

No.	Team	Conf.	Conf. Rank	
26.	Utah	Pac-12	4	QB Jordan Wynn is back from injury as Utes begin second Pac season.
27.	Penn State	Big Ten	6	Critical year; O'Brien needs to show that Penn State is still Penn State.
28.	NC State	ACC	4	Great DBs, fine QB. Could challenge in Atlantic Divison after 8-5 season.
29.	Texas A&M	SEC	7	Big "if:" If the Aggies finish games stronger, they'll be fine, even in SEC.
30.	Missouri	SEC	8	Mizzou, QB James Franklin ready to challenge SEC with spread-option.
31.	Auburn	SEC	9	Maturing team should win at least eight games again.
32.	Washington	Pac-12	5	QB Keith Price, WR-KR Kasen Williams are supreme talents. Oh, that D ...
33.	Notre Dame	Ind	1	Who's the QB? Schedule makes it hard to win more than eight.
34.	Virginia	ACC	5	Coach Mike London has made major strides in two years in program.
35.	Georgia Tech	ACC	6	Paul Johnson is 21-11 in ACC in 4 years, second-best mark in league.
36.	Rutgers	Big East	2	Defense could be even better than last year's top 15 unit.
37.	Tennessee	SEC	10	After worst-ever 1-7 SEC record, Vols should rebound to win 7-8.
38.	UCF	CUSA	1	Loaded backfield helps push the Knights to top of Conference USA.
39.	BYU	Ind	2	Cougars try to take advantage of QB Riley Nelson's good wheels.
40.	Texas Tech	Big 12	7	Experienced group back, but gave up 256 pts in 5-game skid to end '11.
41.	Iowa	Big Ten	7	Hawkeyes have been just 4-4 in the Big Ten in each of past two years.
42.	Purdue	Big Ten	8	Veteran team could inch forward again after 7-6 season.
43.	Baylor	Big 12	8	With Mr. Heisman gone, it's back to scratching for any old bowl.
44.	Pittsburgh	Big East	3	The play of QB Tino Sunseri and a rebuilt defense are the keys.
45.	North Carolina	ACC	7	Larry Fedora needs to bring stability back to Heels.
46.	Mississippi State	SEC	11	QB Tyler Russell holds the key to making a move higher.
47.	Cincinnati	Big East	4	Bearcats could go far with QB Munchie Legaux at the helm.
48.	UCLA	Pac-12	6	An NFL retread in Los Angeles? Hey, this could work!
49.	Miami	ACC	8	Al Golden's contract runs through 2020; 2012 not one to remember.
50.	Cal	Pac-12	7	Progress from QB Zach Maynard would shake Bears from doldrums.
51.	Washington State	Pac-12	8	Welcome, Mike Leach. The era of the Cougs being boring is over.
52.	Vanderbilt	SEC	12	Competed and went to bowl in James Franklin's first season.
53.	SMU	CUSA	2	RB Zach Line returns after scoring 17 touchdowns last season.
54.	Wake Forest	ACC	9	Third-year starting QB Tanner Price helps keep Deacs competitive.
55.	Northwestern	Big Ten	9	Looking at something right around .500 for the third straight year.
56.	Connecticut	Big East	5	RB Lyle McCombs and experienced defense provide bowl hopes.
57.	South Florida	Big East	6	Led again by QB B.J. Daniels, Bulls try to shed second-half slump.
58.	Iowa State	Big 12	9	One of the nation's best linebacker tandems give reason to tune in.
59.	Arizona	Pac-12	9	RichRod motivated to prove Michigan flop wasn't all on him.
60.	Ole Miss	SEC	13	Getting buried in the league with 15 consecutive losses in SEC play.
61.	Kentucky	SEC	14	Had five-year bowl streak snapped in Joker Phillips' second year.
62.	Illinois	Big Ten	10	Tim Beckman takes over after the Zooker hit a brick wall at midseason.
63.	Arizona State	Pac-12	10	QBs new. Run game solid. Todd Graham ... just renting?
64.	Marshall	CUSA	3	Herd rallying in the right direction, should make back-to-back bowls.
65.	Oregon State	Pac-12	11	Rough patch (eight wins in two years) for respected coach Mike Riley.
66.	Tulsa	CUSA	4	Hurricane lost QB G.J. Kinne from team than went 7-1 in the league.
67.	Houston	CUSA	5	Kevin Sumlin didn't leave cupboard bare, but 13-1 ain't happening.
68.	Ohio	MAC	1	QB Tyler Tettleton back to lead the Bobcats, who went 10-4 in 2011.
69.	Duke	ACC	10	Not enough gimmies on the schedule for first bowl since 1994.
70.	Southern Miss	CUSA	6	First-year coach Ellis Johnson could be tripped up by QB issues.
71.	Boston College	ACC	11	Star power lacking: Luke Kuechly gone, Montel Harris ailing (knee).
72.	Louisiana Tech	WAC	1	Sonny Dykes has program on rise; clear favorite in watered-down WAC.
73.	FIU	Sun Belt	1	No more T.Y. Hilton, but looks like a bowl for third straight year.
74.	Minnesota	Big Ten	11	Check the sked: Gophers could be 4-0, surpassing 2011's win total.
75.	Syracuse	Big East	7	Re-addition of Temple to Big East keeps Orange out of last.
76.	Maryland	ACC	12	After 2-10 disaster, Terps young and inexperienced across the board.
77.	Colorado	Pac-12	12	New QB, new RB, standout WR Paul Richardson tore ACL in spring.
78.	Fresno State	MWC	2	Has league's best run-pass combination as it moves to MWC.
79.	Wyoming	MWC	3	Sophomore QB Brett Smith is a keeper; Pokes went 8-5 last season.
80.	Navy	Ind	3	Mids try to get back into bowl biz after seven-year streak snapped.
81.	San Diego State	MWC	4	Aztecs will have to reload on offense before 2013 move to Big East.
82.	Utah State	WAC	2	Will carry over momentum from strong finish (plus bowl) to 2011.
83.	Nevada	MWC	5	Pack went 4-1 last season against current members of the MWC.
84.	Kent State	MAC	2	Lots of experience is a positive ...if it means woeful offense gets better.
85.	Western Michigan	MAC	3	Having QB Alex Carder is a good start, but questions abound on D.
86.	Air Force	MWC	6	Falcons try for sixth straight bowl with new key players in backfield.
87.	Indiana	Big Ten	12	Kevin Wilson's only win in debut season came vs. South Carolina State.
88.	Hawaii	MWC	7	At long last, Norm Chow is a head coach for the first time.
89.	Kansas	Big 12	10	And so begins the second act of Charlie Weis' coaching career.
90.	Arkansas State	Sun Belt	2	Gus Malzahn brings his spead offense to first head coaching gig.
91.	Northern Illinois	MAC	4	Key personnel move: Jordan Lynch replaces QB Chandler Harnisch.
92.	San Jose State	WAC	3	With decent QB play (a huge "if") Spartans could be bowl-bound.
93.	Colorado State	MWC	8	Hiring head coach Jim McElwain (Alabama OC) is a good start.
94.	La.-Monroe	Sun Belt	3	Getting close to a "win-or-else" situation for coach Todd Berry.
95.	Toledo	MAC	5	Matt Campbell, at 32, becomes the youngest coach in the FBS.
96.	Louisiana	Sun Belt	4	Mark Hudspeth led team to New Orleans Bowl win in first season.
97.	New Mexico State	WAC	4	Aggies benefit from WAC departures of Nevada, Hawaii, Fresno State.
98.	Troy	Sun Belt	5	Offense should be better ... defense, well, maybe not.
99.	Western Kentucky	Sun Belt	6	Taking a small step back after last year's surprising 7-5 run.
100.	Ball State	MAC	6	A 6-6 season rated as a surprise in coach Pete Lembo's first year.
101.	North Texas	Sun Belt	7	Not looking like Mean Green's first winning season since 2004.
102.	Idaho	WAC	5	Vandals lost too much on both lines to keep pace with WAC leaders.
103.	Middle Tennessee	Sun Belt	8	Must come together on D for an outside shot at breaking even.
104.	Miami (Ohio)	MAC	7	Followed up 2010 MAC title with a plunge to 4-8 overall.
105.	Army	Ind	4	Coach Rich Ellerson looking for first win vs. rivals Navy, Air Force (0-6).
106.	Temple	Big East	8	Bad timing: Rebuilding year comes as Owls move back into Big East.
107.	Tulane	CUSA	7	Curtis Johnson takes over a team that is 31-76 in the past nine years.
108.	East Carolina	CUSA	8	Losing QB Dominique Davis tough for a team that was 5-7 a year ago.
109.	Bowling Green	MAC	8	QB Matt Schilz threw for 3,024 yards and 28 touchdowns last year.
110.	Rice	CUSA	9	Defense has been too shaky to make a move in Conference USA.
111.	UTEP	CUSA	10	Tough schedule has Miners headed to seventh losing season in a row.
112.	Buffalo	MAC	9	Branden Oliver rushed for 1,395 yards last season.
113.	Florida Atlantic	Sun Belt	9	Carl Pelini second FAU coach ever, replacing Howard Schnellenberger.
114.	UAB	CUSA	11	Hiring of Garrick McGee creates a little buzz around the Blazers.
115.	Akron	MAC	10	Terry Bowden is a bold hire for a program that had little left to lose.
116.	Eastern Michigan	MAC	11	Alex Gillett is most experienced QB in the MAC.
117.	Central Michigan	MAC	12	It's been back-to-back 3-9 campaigns for the Chippewas.
118.	UNLV	MWC	9	Bobby Hauck is 4-21 in two seasons, with no road victories.
119.	Memphis	CUSA	12	Bar set low for Justin Fuente; predecessor Larry Porter was 3-21.
120.	New Mexico	MWC	10	Bob Davie jumped from the ESPN booth into a fine mess.
121.	South Alabama	Sun Belt	10	It's the final year of the Jags' transition to the FBS.
122.	Texas State	WAC	6	Dennis Franchione starting second year of second tour in San Marcos.
123.	UMass	MAC	13	Basically, a .500-level FCS program for the past four seasons.
124.	UT-San Antonio	WAC	7	Potential here. Roadrunners will move to C-USA after year in WAC.

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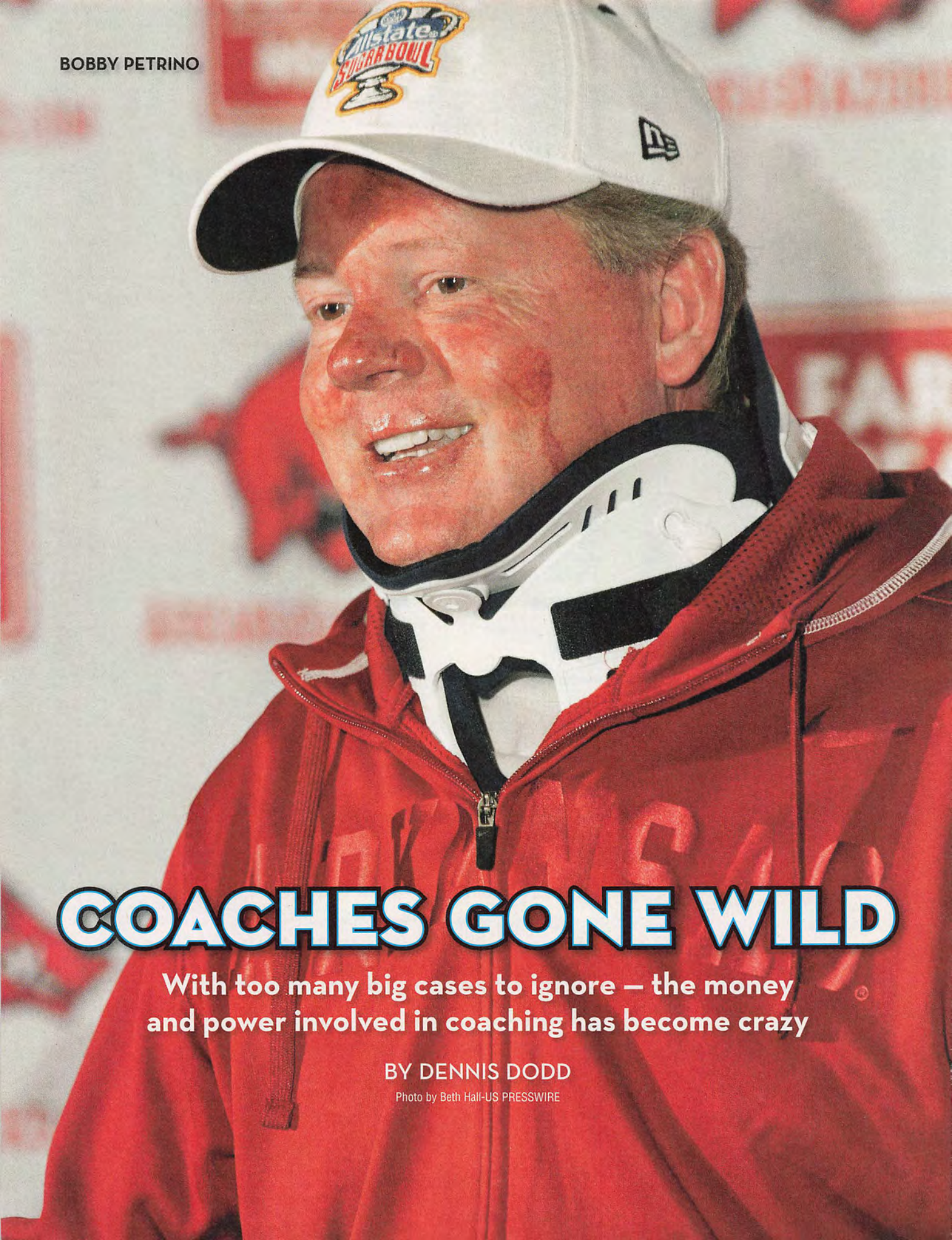


BOBBY PETRINO

COACHES GONE WILD

With too many big cases to ignore – the money and power involved in coaching has become crazy

BY DENNIS DODD

Photo by Beth Hall-US PRESSWIRE

It has not been a proud run for a significant slice of the coaching profession, so forgive us if we leave any names out.

Joe Paterno? A sad and sudden fall from grace. Now, tragically, gone.

Butch Davis? Fired at North Carolina.

Urban Meyer? A new job — and perhaps a new reputation.

Jim Tressel? He's *soooo* 2011.

There *are* deadlines, you know, so we offer this disclaimer: The dizzying pace of coaches gone wild means that Bobby Petrino may even have his next job by the time you read this.

Coaches' conduct has not only become a narrative for the 2012 season, it has been the main talking point in the industry for a while. Blame whatever and whomever.

• The money? In the offseason, Alabama's Nick Saban became the first $6 million coach (at least for a portion of his contract). That means, by the way, that he's making in salary roughly *three times* the amount of money that the school pays for the complete scholarship package (tuition, room, board, books, etc.) of all 85 players on scholarship.

• The power? Petrino apparently felt he was titanium. One of the state's highest-paid employees rode helmetless on a motorcycle with a woman half his age who was not his wife. And that's the tasteful part of the story.

• Maybe we're all to blame. As long as we give our undying adoration to mere mortals, we shouldn't be surprised. But, Good Lord, the variety of the misconduct has been stunning. There were NCAA violations at North Carolina and Ohio State, but Davis was never named in the NCAA report on the Tar Heels. Tressel *was* the central figure in Ohio State getting a bowl ban in 2012.

• Years of neglect by coaches and administrators may have led to Miami being on the NCAA chopping block. A weasely jock sniffer named Nevin Shapiro allegedly showered players with cash, gifts and the South Beach night life. Shapiro was so influential that he once reportedly confronted Miami's compliance director in the press box. And he *still* was allowed to be around the team.

But how do you compare that with whatever role Paterno had in the Jerry Sandusky scandal?

"I think the Paterno thing and Tressel had a profound impact on this country," said Jack Stark, a clinical psychologist out of Nebraska with a thriving sports practice. "It changed college presidents, ADs and boards of directors who are saying, 'I don't care who this guy is. We cannot (let him) take the program down.'"

Since May 2011, those two national championship coaches departed in shame, along with a highly respected president (Penn State's Graham Spanier) and his athletic director (Tim Curley, who was placed on administrative leave). How quickly things change. Spanier told CBSSports.com last summer that cheating in college football was "about as bad as it's been in the modern era."

Turns out the breaking of NCAA rules wasn't his biggest concern.

"It's so crazy that this one (freakin') pervert son of a bitch can bring down a university," Paul Levine said of Sandusky. Levine, a Southern California-based author and screenwriter, became devoted to Paterno as a Penn State student in the 1960s.

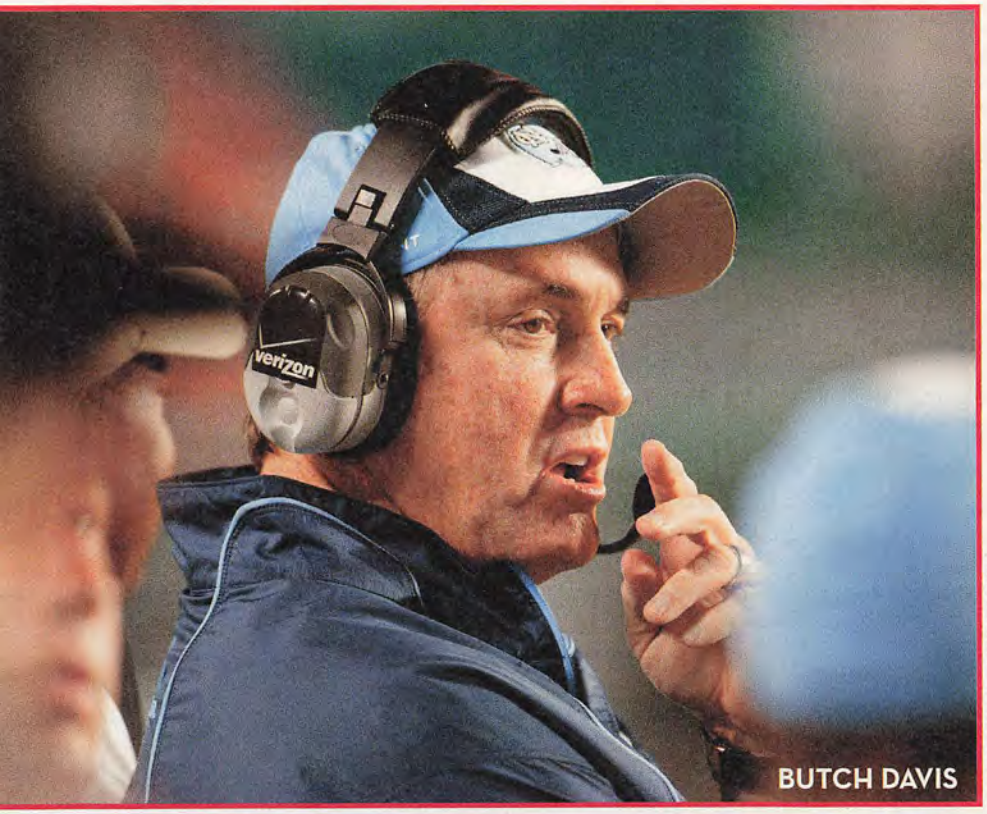
"I viewed him then," Levine said, "as a

"I'm deeply worried about football ... if we don't fix some of the problems in football, in five years it will be as bad as basketball."

– Former Penn State president Graham Spanier, months before the Jerry Sandusky case became public

CHIP KELLY

Photo by Kirby Lee-Image of Sport-US PRESSWIRE



BUTCH DAVIS

Photo by Jonathan Brownfield-US PRESSWIRE

"I was there when Woody Hayes punched that guy in the Gator Bowl. When all is said and done, it is a chapter in the book – it's not *the* book."

– Glen Mason, longtime coach, now Big Ten Network analyst

towering figure."

But towering figures are being toppled around the country. Where tradition, loyalty and discipline were once considered the greatest virtues of the profession, we have seen win-at-all-costs override everything else. There *is* nothing else.

In the spring, Petrino was the latest coach to run his career into a ditch. (OK, pun intended.)

No one knows when his profession is going to be tamed. The same organization (American Football Coaches Association) that urged the NCAA to adopt tougher penalties for rulebook cheating can't account for the marital sort.

Does it matter off the field? Should it matter? There was a time when we were disgusted that Lane Kiffin had piled up a half dozen secondary violations at Tennessee.

Something has changed for the worse. What once was shocking — Woody Hayes punching a Clemson linebacker — doesn't qualify in modern times. While Hayes "only" lost his temper ... *The Sporting News* said in an offseason story that Meyer lost control of his team during a magical run at Florida.

"Over the last two years he was there," one former player told the publication, "the players had taken complete control of the team."

The result was not only 30 run-ins with the law over six years by Florida players, but also two national championships.

So where's the problem? In one way or another, all the coaches mentioned in this story delivered. Some spectacularly.

While Chip Kelly hadn't been formally charged by the NCAA as of late April, the recruiting practices of Oregon's coach are open to question. His program was under investigation by the NCAA. At the least, we can all agree that paying $25,000 to a third-party "evaluator" (Willie Lyles) seems like a bit much, and — uh, providing NCAA statements that, shall we say, can be easily misinterpreted — is not exactly in the spirit of compliance.

Davis led Miami out of a mid-1990s probation and laid the recruiting foundation for the Hurricanes' 2001 national championship. If you're willing to look past since-vacated wins in 2008 and 2009 at North Carolina, Davis led the Tar Heels to their most sustained success since Mack Brown. That was before academic fraud, South Beach partying, and extra benefits were discovered by the NCAA.

Larry Fedora now takes over in a low-pressure job in the underachieving ACC. Like Meyer, his program is also banned from a bowl in 2012.

Meyer didn't know about the ban until the NCAA weighed in 22 days after Ohio State hired him in December. "That was a shot," he said.

Consider it a gift from The Vest that keeps on giving.

Bill O'Brien takes over at Penn State, a fresh face at a place that has been comfortable with Paterno's comforting, coke-bottle-rimmed, craggy mug for decades. It's about more than turning around a program at Penn State. It's about changing the groupthink that allowed someone like Sandusky to operate in the shadows for years.

Maybe that's why Penn State intentionally didn't hire an insider. The chain link fence that walled off Happy Valley from the world needs to be torn

down. Glen Mason has considered all this. He was one of Paterno's closest friends. He also played and coached for Woody.

"I was there when Woody Hayes punched that guy in the Gator Bowl," said Mason, now an analyst with the Big Ten Network. "When all is said and done, it is a chapter in the book — it's not *the* book."

For Woody. For the profession. We can only hope. For now, Petrino's salvation is that he didn't cheat according to the 434-page NCAA Manual, the industry's gospel according to Mark (Emmert).

Character issues alone usually don't keep a fired coach down for long. The key point, according to an attorney who has represented coaches in the past, is, "There weren't any NCAA violations."

Holding coaches to the same standard of discipline asked of their players is a good place to start. Who knew that Arkansas athletic director Jeff Long would qualify as Man of the Year material for merely doing the right thing?

The right thing apparently went out of style a long time ago. In the 75-year history of the wire service era, only two schools with national championships have *never* had an NCAA major violation in football: BYU and Penn State.

"That's kind of amazing to me if that's the case," BYU athletic director Tom Holmoe said, "because it doesn't bode well."

The last four BCS title game participants — Auburn, Oregon, LSU, Alabama — have either been on probation, are about to be investigated or already are under investigation by the NCAA. Almost half of the current FBS schools (56) have committed at least one major violation in football since 1987. Since that year, there has been an average of three such cases nationally per year.

Multiple champions of the past 20 years have been named Miami, USC, Florida, Alabama and LSU ... none of which would need an introduction to the members of the NCAA compliance committee.

The "everybody else does it," defense has simply become accepted as the norm, and the only issue is whose hand will be caught in the cookie jar next. And that's just with the NCAA violations.

"I'm deeply worried about football," Spanier said last summer before the walls fell in on him and his university. "I believe if we don't fix some of the problems in football, in five years it will be as bad as basketball."

That's about as bad a thing as you can say about college football at the moment. The 2011 Final Four featured two coaches who had vacated tournament appearances in the same *year* — John Calipari and Jim Calhoun in 1996.

UConn is ineligible for the 2013 tournament, a victim of new, toughened standards in the Academic Progress Rate. North Carolina and Ohio State are already there with a postseason ban in football for their own misdeeds. Emmert's stated purpose since he took office two years ago was to wipe out the incentive to cheat.

He's got some work to do.

"The reward outweighs the risk," said Dave Ridpath, an NCAA compliance expert and assistant professor of Sports Administration at Ohio University. "Most people will tell you that USC lost their BCS championship (in the Reggie Bush case). At the end, I wonder if people really care."

"The reward outweighs the risk. Most people will tell you that USC lost their BCS championship (in the Reggie Bush case). At the end, I wonder if people really care."

— Dave Ridpath, NCAA compliance expert and assistant professor of Sports Administration at Ohio University

Photo by Greg Bartram-US PRESSWIRE

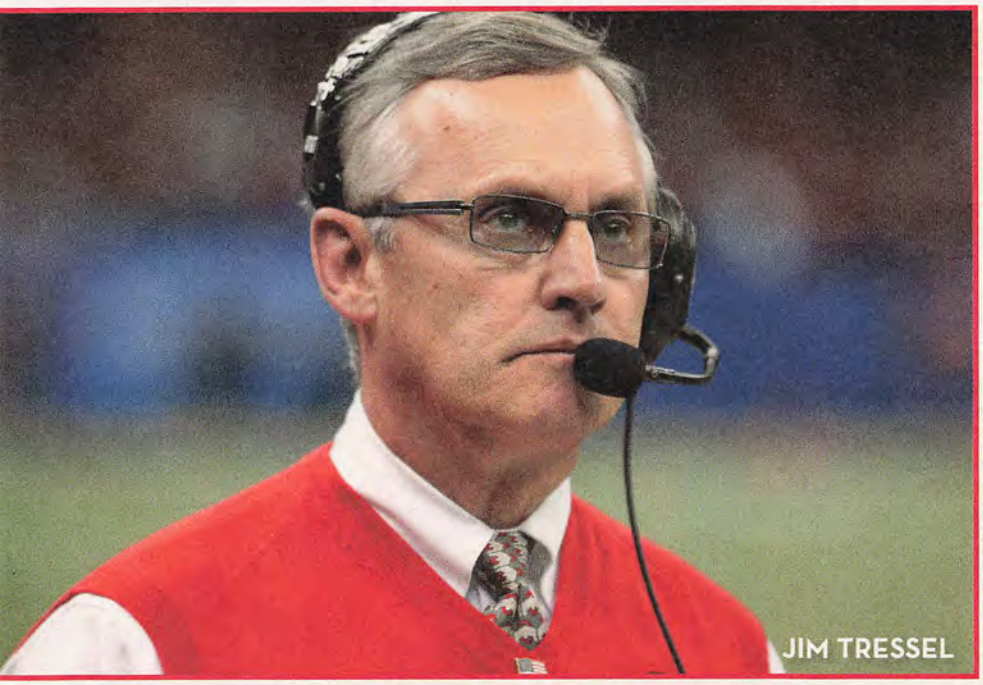
URBAN MEYER

JOE PATERNO

Photo by Rob Christy-US PRESSWIRE

"The Paterno thing and Tressel had a profound impact on this country. It changed college presidents, ADs and boards of directors who are saying, 'I don't care who this guy is. We cannot (let him) take the program down.'"

— Jack Stark, sports psychologist



JIM TRESSEL

Photo by Matthew Emmons-US PRESSWIRE

Petrino's baggage going forward includes a morally ambiguous record of covering up and lying, whether it was on a tarmac talking to Auburn officials or walking out on the Atlanta Falcons. Throw in the Arkansas misdeeds and you would think that's enough to keep Petrino from *ever* being a head coach at the BCS level again.

"I think it's going to take him a very long time," said Stark, who has spent 35 years in the profession. "He's done two things. He burned his bridges pretty good at the pro level in the middle of the season, which is unheard of. There is a lot of anger there at the pro level.

"At the collegiate level ... the thing that distinguished him is he repeatedly lied. That seems to be the new line in the sand for athletic directors."

That's a line that puts ADs, coaches and college sports on trial after the latest "worse than ..." scandal. If Petrino is hired again at the college level, then what are his employers saying about his conduct? What does it say about *their* values?

Probably that winning trumps most everything, which confirms that exactly nothing is new.

Petrino remains one of most innovative offensive minds in the country. He took a program that had been in the middle of the SEC and elevated it to national championship contention last season. The Hogs were ranked No. 3 in the BCS going into the last week of the season.

It may be as simple as the value of the sport itself. A disgraced Petrino would be hotter — excuse that adjective — than any other sport's disgraced coach. Disgrace suddenly becomes relative when an athletic department's finances are involved. As football goes, so goes that department. Under Petrino, Arkansas had equaled its best two-year run (21 wins) in school history.

Coaches will be hired again for the same reason Petrino's return can't be discounted. They win. That might be all Coach P needs.

Here's what might make Petrino's conduct harder to overlook: There's no argument about his culpability. It was

self-inflicted and terrible.

That motorcycle passenger, Jessica Dorrell, somehow landed a job in the football office that was coveted by 158 other applicants. She was paid by Petrino — $20,000, according to school officials — beyond her $55,000 salary.

Petrino apparently didn't care about using a private cell phone either. A simple records request revealed thousands of calls and texts to Dorrell since September. Either Petrino wanted to get caught or thought he was too powerful to be fired if he ever did.

Emotional scars do heal — this *is* the land of second chances — and there has to be an AD/president somewhere who is going to be desperate enough to win.

Stark sees those character flaws each day. He has worked with NASCAR drivers who can't walk into a restaurant without being swarmed, and CEOs who handle billion-dollar corporations. In an offshoot of his practice, he also counsels football coaches around the country. There was so much demand that at one point he had to stop taking clients.

"I worked with Tom Osborne for 25 years," Stark said. "I bet he always felt that he was a year away from getting fired if he went 6-6."

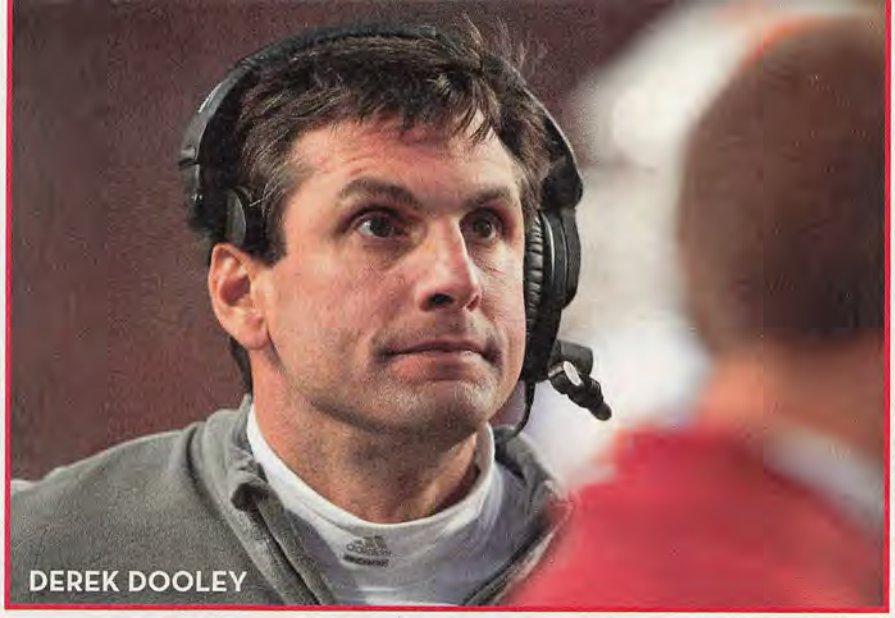
There is a difference, though, between insecurity and Biblical-proportion indiscretion.

There are also worse Monday-morning analyses of Petrino's future than Tim Brando's.

"He going to have to pull the PR coup of a lifetime by throwing himself on the Dr. Phils of the world," said the national radio host and CBS analyst. "He is going to have to go on daytime TV, maybe follow up with a book. If he doesn't have handlers, he better get them. If he does it the right way, he comes back full bore."

Of course, most of Hog Nation could give two snorts what happens next to Petrino. His future remains a national case study — until the next coach goes wild.

Dennis Dodd is a senior writer for CBSSports.com covering national college football.



DEREK DOOLEY

Photo by Beth Hall-US PRESSWIRE

HOT SEAT COACHES

Some coaches get fired the old-fashioned way — by not winning enough. Here is a look at five who need to win now, or they and the coaches they hired will join the unemployment line:

1. DEREK DOOLEY, TENNESSEE – Dooley is 11-14 in two seasons and is trying to avoid the first three-year stretch of losing seasons in Knoxville in more than 100 years. **PREDICTION:** A revamped coaching staff can coax at least seven wins out of this bunch, but none of the victories figure to resonate. Vol Nation will still be itching for change.

2. FRANK SPAZIANI, BOSTON COLLEGE – Always fighting a battle for relevancy within its own city, Boston College has had declining victory totals in Spaziani's three seasons, including last year's 4-8 mark that snapped a 12-year bowl streak. **PREDICTION:** Spaz won't get to the final year of a five-year plan.

3. RANDY EDSALL, MARYLAND – The second-year Terps coach is already trying to stay afloat after a 2-10 season, the transfers of about two dozen players (bye, bye Danny O'Brien) and a tepid endorsement from his athletic director in the offseason. **PREDICTION:** The cash-strapped Terps can't afford to make a change so soon.

4. TOMMY TUBERVILLE, TEXAS TECH – Tuberville arrived before the 2010 season amid the tempest of Mike Leach's dismissal, so that wasn't easy, and he has done little to convert the pro-Pirate crowd after compiling a 13-12 record and off-field drama. **PREDICTION:** A veteran team cures some of the woes. Patience prevails for a year.

5. JEFF TEDFORD, CAL – He had the Golden Bears on USC's heels for a stretch, but those days are gone, and another middlin' finish is projected for this season. Cal's 12-15 conference record the past three years suggests the magic is gone after 10 years on the job. **PREDICTION:** The program needs a major shot in the arm to pay for the renovated Memorial Stadium ... and it will get one with a new coach touting a national image.

— Anthony Gimino

REBOOT

WHEN THE BIG 12 HAS 10, AND THE BIG TEN HAS 12, AND THE BIG EAST HEADS TO SAN DIEGO ...

BY DENNIS DODD

Call it the Great Reboot.

Usually, that's the thing you do to your computer when the screen freezes. Too much information causes overload. Hit that cursed button. Sometimes it works; sometimes it doesn't. That's why they put customer support overseas that keeps you on hold for three hours.

In 2012, the Great Reboot projects the curse of the digital age to the condition of college football.

Rebirth, reset, whatever.

There has been too much overload lately. At the very least, the hard drive needs a good defragmenting. Or even debugging.

It seems like the entire sport is rebooting itself in 2012. What's old is new.

The hottest topic of the offseason was the 11 FBS commissioners (plus Notre Dame) trying to come up with a new postseason model that would begin in 2014. Sorta reformatting the drive and starting from scratch? Not quite.

There are no new ideas, just new buzz words and revenue sharing models to frame those old ideas.

Conference realignment already had a chokehold on the game. There's a game show out there somewhere just waiting for the title: "Who's In That League?" The Big East spent the offseason reconfiguring itself into what will eventually be a four time-zone league in 2015.

In 2014, Boise State and San Diego State join what is still apparently going to be called the Big East Conference. East of what, we're not sure. *Big Country*, anyone? Or the Big Frequent Fliers Conference?

In the meantime, the SEC added a team from the Midwest (Missouri) and a team from the Southwest (Texas A&M).

What's newest is the Pac-12, as it debuts a network, cashes in on a lucrative rights deal and continues to break in six new coaches

since the beginning of 2010.

Change, of course, isn't always good. Twenty-seven programs are starting over with new coaches. In the past year, Ohio State and Arkansas sent coaches packing with a combined nine BCS bowls on their resumes. Not that they had much choice, mind you.

The Great Reboot also has descended into the absurd. Try to name a school that *hasn't* attempted a big splash in the offseason — successful or not — by debuting new uniforms. Seems highlighter yellow jerseys are replacing red zone defense as the most important component of a program.

The Big 12 — which is down to 10 — has lost four teams in the past two years. It added West Virginia and TCU beginning this season to get back up to 10. Never mind that the Mountaineers' closest Big 12 foe is in Iowa.

Speaking of realignment, for 83 years, Cal's Memorial Stadium has rested on the Hayward Fault, one of the most active earthquake zones in the world. Beginning this year it rests more comfortably. The historic stadium has been retro-fitted to be quake-proof.

But shaky (as in finances) continues to be the operative word in Berkeley. Now if Jeff Tedford can only find a quarterback.

The best place to start on the field is the SEC. Why not? The league has won six consecutive national championships. Alabama and LSU both start where they finished, somewhere in the top five. In Tuscaloosa, the more things change, the more they stay Saban.

That crystal football has ended up at Alabama two of the past three years and already they need a new one. The father of a player knocked over the trophy and broke it, causing one of the biggest stirs of the spring.

That's motivation enough for Nick Saban to go out and win a third crystal football in four years. He loses a Heisman finalist (Trent Richardson), an offensive coordinator (Jim McElwain left for Colorado State) and the usual raft of NFL draftees. The directive hasn't changed. Not one minute of rest.

"I understand that it's only human nature to be satisfied with success," Saban told CBSSports.com. "The good news is that this team doesn't seem to have as much of a hangover (as the 2010 team). But I know this is something we're going to have to hammer home into their heads every day."

Like most of last season, though, Bama might not be considered the best team in its own league. LSU actually gets better at quarterback. Zach Mettenberger takes over for the sometimes-dependable Jordan Jefferson. He'll hand off to a stable of running backs that goes five deep.

The defense returns a Heisman finalist in Tryann Mathieu, and a philosopher — the always chatty defensive end Sam Montgomery. The Tigers are also trying to figure out what the hell happened after the 21-0 skunking in the second Alabama meeting that also happened to be the BCS Championship Game.

"You still hear it now. Our kids still hear it now about the game," offensive coordinator Greg Studrawa said. "Because everybody was so fired up after a wonderful season, that when it ends like that, that's what they focus on. Not the 13 wins, not how great it was up to that point.

"Now you get a chance for redemption."

Speaking of redemption, Rich Rodriguez is at his second job since leaving West Virginia. You may recall that the Michigan thing didn't quite work out. At Arizona, he is remade, redeemed and — yes — rebooted. Athletic director Greg Byrne conducted a national search and found the anti-Mike Stoops. Rich is an offensive guy. Rich is personable. Rich also trashed the effort of Stoops' former players — while renting Stoops' house in the offseason.

RichRod found 300-pound linemen who couldn't bench their weight. He found defensive backs who couldn't put up 240.

"My point is, what have you been doing?" Rodriguez said. "You cheated the program,a but you also cheated yourself."

Speaking of starting over, Mike Leach finally found work. He had been out of coaching since December 2009, and we were beginning to wonder if active lawsuits against Texas Tech and ESPN were going to impact his future. It was only a matter of time, even if that time lasted almost two years.

Washington State is a heck of a comfort zone. Call it Lubbock North. Out of the way and, currently, out of mind. But Leach in Pullman has a clean slate, a loyal and capable AD and a president who doesn't meddle.

"A lot of schools wanted him," athletic director Bill Moos said. "He wanted us."

The same can be said of Urban Meyer. The best name remaining on the board in late November ended a brief sabbatical when he got the Ohio State gig.

In a flash, the mercurial former Florida coach decided to leave his family to devote more time to football. Or something like that. If Meyer was looking to rest, recover and retool, it didn't take very long for him to do it. His time away from football lasted considerably less than a year when you remember he was an ESPN analyst before taking the Buckeyes' job.

Photo by John Biever/Sports Illustrated/Getty Images

BCS National Championship: Alabama's Trent Richardson holding up AFCA The Coaches' Trophy after winning the BCS title game vs LSU at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome.

Arkansas was on its best two-year run in more than 40 years until Bobby Petrino decided to take a Sunday Harley ride with his mistress on — wait for it — April Fool's Day. The Hogs, though, aren't the Tide. As it settled on John L. Smith as a one-year interim, it was clear the program remained in a fragile state despite 21 victories and two major bowls in the past two seasons.

Crash a crystal trophy? Arkansas would kill for the chance.

"You described it perfectly," said Regina Gardner-Morgan, mother of Arkansas tailback Knile Davis. "Bobby Petrino has done so many things to work up to this point. He has that team just right and they're just about to go over the hill. Then something like this happens."

No worries, Hogs. Hit the button. This is your year, too, if you believe in the Great Reboot of 2012.

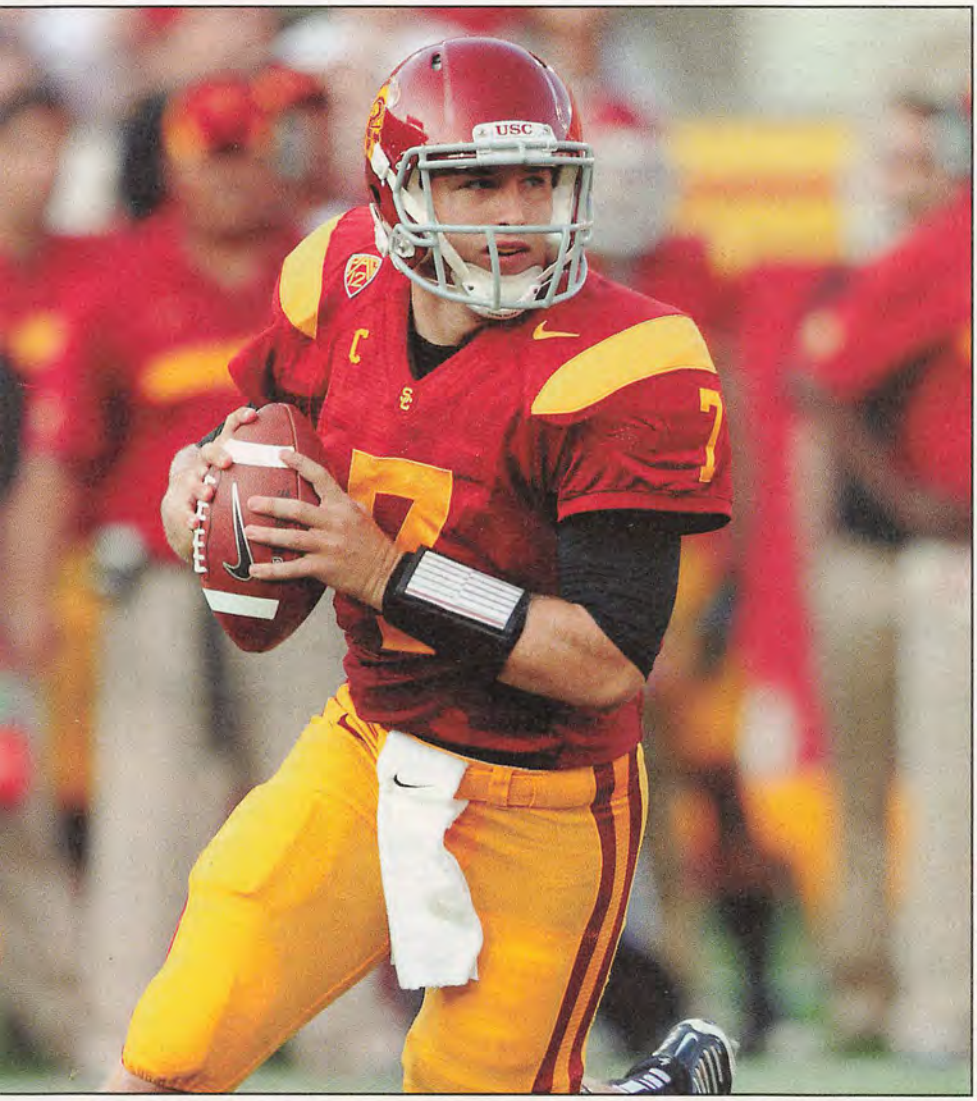


Photo by Steve Beyer

Barkley isn't finished making memories at USC

By Scott Wolf

It is not enough for USC quarterback Matt Barkley to be the Heisman Trophy frontrunner and potential No. 1 NFL draft pick. At the same time he gets hyped for a record-setting senior season, he's also looking to have a lot of fun.

When Barkley decided to return to USC he did not merely call coach Lane Kiffin. He orchestrated a dramatic moment, asking Kiffin to drive to his house just before Christmas.

After Kiffin walked in the house, Barkley handed him a handmade cardboard ornament that showed the pair embracing after the USC-Colorado game, where the star quarterback set the Trojans' single-game record for touchdown passes. A caption read, "2011 Great Memories."

The ornament barely impressed a cynical Kiffin, who said, "Cool ornament, Matt."

But Barkley, *Lindy's* Offensive Player of the Year, told Kiffin to turn it over and read another caption: "One more year. To the memories next year."

"I tried to be all sad," Barkley said of the way he was trying to fool Kiffin. "But I can't hold a straight face."

Or as Kiffin says, "Matt can't lie."

Barkley is one of the most driven and competitive athletes to play for USC in the past 15 years, but that is complemented by a boyish nature that does anything for a smile.

"I really did want him to stay," said his sister, Lainy, who also attends USC. "It's so fun being on campus with him."

Barkley's honesty and good nature (and his strong arm) are reasons USC feels so positive about its quest for a national title. And even he will not deny it.

"Looking at the team we have, it's definitely something special," Barkley said. "We're on the ride."

That is the type of comment that makes Kiffin wince because he likes to say, "You won't hear us talking about a national championship."

Barkley's teammates, however, love his directness.

"Matt always kept us energized because he is positive," former USC tailback Marc Tyler said. "He knew how to motivate us and willed us to win during games last season."

Being a motivator is a natural talent for Barkley, who always finds ways to keep things fresh and interesting.

Barkley took 15 of his teammates on a trip to Haiti to help build homes, a trip that illustrated Barkley's penchant for finding ways to make his teammates bond. It is a stark contrast to the last quarterback with this much hype at USC (Matt Leinart), who avoided much interaction with his teammates during his senior year.

"I've never been out of the country," USC defensive end Devon Ken-

nard said. "I think it was a great idea by Matt."

It is not an unusual trip for Barkley. After his sophomore year, with no bowl game because of NCAA sanctions, he went to Nigeria with his family to help the needy.

Going to Haiti appealed to Barkley more than being an NFL rookie. He knew he was going to be a top 10 draft choice but said, "I was meant to be at USC."

By the end of this season, Barkley appears to be meant to be USC's leader in career passing and total offense. He also will be the school's first three-time captain.

"He's got a chance to blow all these school records out of the water," Kiffin said.

USC will open its new $100-million football center this year named after legendary coach John McKay, but the reverence for Barkley already led to another possible title.

"The Matt Barkley Center sounds better," USC athletic director Pat Haden joked.

Barkley would turn down that offer. He might enjoy being in the spotlight, but dislikes over-the-top presentations. When he announced his return to USC, he was surprised the school arranged for the school band, song girls and the Heisman trophies flanking him inside Heritage Hall.

"That's not me," Barkley said. "That's not what I'm about. I just didn't want that image of myself. Hopefully, we'll add another (Heisman Trophy) here later, but as of now, we have some work to do first."

What Barkley wants is to win and go to a bowl game, preferably the BCS title game. He endured the Trojans' two-year bowl ban and wants his senior year to make up for NCAA sanctions.

"We've waited a long time and it's been frustrating sometimes not going to a bowl, but we never let it define us," Barkley said. "We can make this year worth remembering and we've got a team to do it. I can't wait."

OFFENSE

Matt Barkley

Montee Ball

Marcus Lattimore

Robert Woods

Sammy Watkins

Tyler Eifert

FIRST TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Matt Barkley	6-2	230	Sr.	USC
RB	Montee Ball	5-11	212	Sr.	Wisconsin
RB	Marcus Lattimore	6-0	218	Jr.	South Carolina
WR	Robert Woods	6-1	190	Jr.	USC
WR	Sammy Watkins	6-1	200	So.	Clemson
TE	Tyler Eifert	6-6	251	Sr.	Notre Dame
C	Barrett Jones	6-5	302	Sr.	Alabama
OL	Alex Hurst	6-6	340	Sr.	LSU
OL	Luke Joeckel	6-6	310	Jr.	Texas A&M
OL	Ricky Wagner	6-6	322	Sr.	Wisconsin
OL	Chance Warmack	6-3	320	Sr.	Alabama
PK	Caleb Sturgis	5-11	187	Sr.	Florida

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
QB	Denard Robinson	6-0	195	Sr.	Michigan
RB	Knile Davis	6-0	226	Jr.	Arkansas
RB	Ray Graham	5-9	195	Sr.	Pittsburgh
WR	Keenan Allen	6-3	206	Jr.	Cal
WR	Marquess Wilson	6-4	183	Jr.	Washington State
TE	Philip Lutzenkirchen	6-5	250	Sr.	Auburn
C	Dalton Freeman	6-5	285	Sr.	Clemson
OL	Omoregie Uzzi	6-3	300	Sr.	Georgia Tech
OL	Gabe Ikard	6-4	295	Jr.	Oklahoma
OL	Chris Faulk	6-6	325	Jr.	LSU
OL	Taylor Lewan	6-8	302	Jr.	Michigan
PK	Dustin Hopkins	6-2	190	Sr.	Florida State

Barrett Jones

Alex Hurst

Luke Joeckle

Ricky Wagner

Chance Warmack

Caleb Sturgis

Photo by Bruce L. Schwartzman

There's No Limiting this Honey Badger

By Dennis Dodd

Tyrann Mathieu has seldom let boundaries define him. Why start now?

LSU's All-American cornerback starred at St. Augustine High in New Orleans' tough Orleans Parish. The practice field was a public park. The field was not lined. There were no goalposts. Still, he made it his own place to make the big time.

"It's part of the culture," said LSU running backs coach Frank Wilson, a "St. Aug" grad and New Orleans recruiting savant. "To those kids, they don't ever see it as, 'We don't have lines.' It's not an issue.

"It's not like they're sitting around there like, 'We're deprived.'"

So how hard could St. Aug be? Neighborhood residents, some casually smoking pot, would watch after the players at practice. On occasion, coach Dave Johnson would have to yell, "Get down" when a particularly dangerous police chase buzzed by.

Formally adopted last year, Mathieu was raised since the age of 5 by his aunt and uncle. FoxSports.com reported earlier this year that his birth father is serving time for murder.

Unlined field? Not a big deal.

More like unlimited potential for the tenacious Honey Badger.

So when Mathieu left Orleans Parish for Baton Rouge at age 17, he was ready for the big time. He flourished even prior to his freshman year. Usually casual 7-on-7 drills became a battleground for a kid longing to prove himself.

LSU veterans remember Mathieu making every play, tight-roping to stay inbounds after interceptions. Skinning knees, bruising elbows. This was a tryout in itself for the skinny 5-9 cover guy.

"He wanted to prove his worth," Wilson said. "To prove, 'I belong here.'"

We know now, don't we?

In a breakout 2011, Mathieu earned respect and that unforgettable nickname — Honey Badger. His accomplishments got him to New York City, where he finished fifth in the Heisman voting. He won the Bednarik Award for National Defensive Player of the Year. Mathieu became perhaps the best player at his position — certainly the one with the most impact — since Charles Woodson.

As a junior, he's *Lindy's* Preseason Defensive Player of the Year. Let's just say he's not stopping there.

"I just think mentally, in my mind, I was always a step ahead of the game," he said. "Not to take anything away from other players, I was just always confident in myself. I could make the best plays."

In redefining the position — at least in 2011 — Mathieu became master of what became dubbed "Badger Plays." In 26 career games, he has four interceptions, 11 forced fumbles, eight fumble recoveries and two punt returns for touchdowns. That adds up to 25 Badger Plays, almost one per game.

"It's almost like split personalities," Wilson said. "On the field, he has this bravado about himself, this swag, for lack of a better word. Off the field, he's humble and almost shy."

When the lights come on, he is the 5-9, 180-pound overachiever. The everyman Honey Badger.

Defensive coordinator John Chavis came up with the nickname returning from a game at West Virginia. A viral YouTube video sprang up showing how nature's real Honey Badger tenaciously

takes on dangerous prey.

Mathieu's cult of personality was such that the Heisman Trust even overlooked his one-game suspension during the season. Officially, LSU said it was for a violation of team rules. ESPN reported that Mathieu and two teammates had tested positive for synthetic marijuana.

"I think I got punished," Mathieu said. "I think I definitely did."

That barely diminished how the adopted son of a UPS truck driver burrowed his way into LSU hearts. With the season in the balance, he led the Tigers back from back-to-back double-digit deficits against Arkansas and in the SEC title game against Georgia.

With his team down 14-0 against the Hogs, Mathieu returned a punt 92 yards for a score. Georgia was up 10-0 in Atlanta, when Honey Badger once again sparked the comeback. A 62-yard punt return for a touchdown ended with Mathieu apparently not even scoring. Replays seemed to indicate that he tossed the ball to an official before crossing the goal line.

"I could see the referee looking at me kind of strange," Mathieu said. "I'll be sure the next time to make sure I cross the goal line."

When you're on that much of a roll, apparently even the replay booth is in awe.

Mathieu wasn't even allowed to return punts until his senior year at St. Aug. Because of his size, he hadn't been a star prospect on the camp circuit. But Wilson saw something. Working for Tennessee at the time, Wilson begged then-coach Lane Kiffin to offer Mathieu. No go.

To get him more attention, Wilson suggested to Johnson — now at Tulane — to feature Mathieu. Basically, Johnson created a few ways to make Mathieu's uncommon skills readily apparent. Then, Mathieu garnered some invitations to summer camps, where he became a national-level recruit.

"Unfortunately, I can't take a knife and cut him open and allow you to see the heart that was in him," Wilson said. "You can't measure what he has."

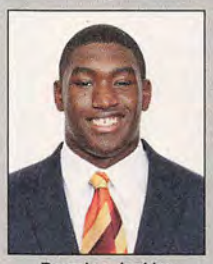
In a way, fans, media and teammates already have.

DEFENSE

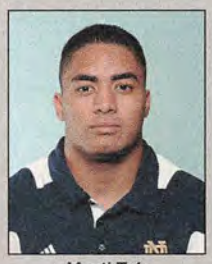
Sam Montgomery

Kawann Short

Star Lotulelei


Brandon Jenkins

Jarvis Jones

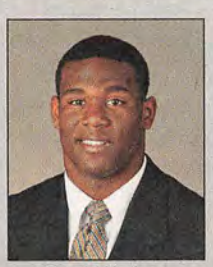

Manti Te'o

FIRST TEAM

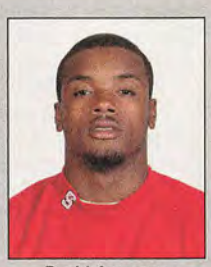
Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	Sam Montgomery	6-4	245	Jr.	LSU
DL	Kawann Short	6-3	310	Sr.	Purdue
DL	Star Lotulelei	6-4	325	Sr.	Utah
DL	Brandon Jenkins	6-3	260	Sr.	Florida State
LB	Jarvis Jones	6-3	241	Sr.	Georgia
LB	Manti Te'o	6-2	255	Sr.	Notre Dame
LB	Gerald Hodges	6-2	233	Sr.	Penn State
DB	Tyrann Mathieu	5-9	175	Jr.	LSU
DB	David Amerson	6-3	194	Jr.	NC State
DB	T.J. McDonald	6-3	205	Sr.	USC
DB	Eric Reid	6-2	208	Jr.	LSU
P	Brad Wing	6-3	184	So.	LSU

SECOND TEAM

Pos	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	School
DL	William Gholston	6-7	275	Jr.	Michigan State
DL	Alex Okafor	6-4	260	Sr.	Texas
DL	Joe Vellano	6-1	285	Sr.	Maryland
DL	Barkevious Mingo	6-5	240	Jr.	LSU
LB	Chase Thomas	6-4	245	Sr.	Stanford
LB	A.J. Klein	6-2	244	Sr.	Iowa State
LB	Khaseem Greene	6-1	220	Sr.	Rutgers
DB	Johnny Adams	5-11	175	Sr.	Michigan State
DB	Nigel Malone	5-10	185	Sr.	Kansas State
DB	Robert Lester	6-2	210	Sr.	Alabama
DB	Bacarri Rambo	6-0	218	Sr.	Georgia
P	Ryan Allen	6-2	215	Sr.	Louisiana Tech


Gerald Hodges

Tyrann Mathieu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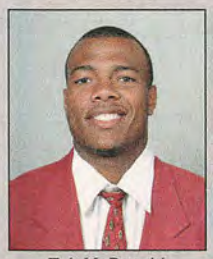
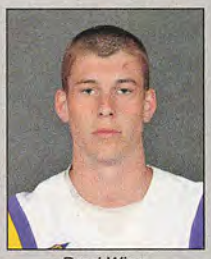

T.J. McDonald

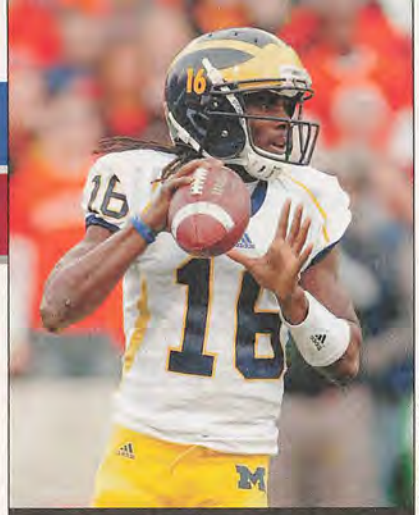
Eric Reid


Brad Wing

PLAYER RATINGS

QUARTERBACKS

Robinson adds 'leader' to his role as UM star



DENARD ROBINSON

Photo by Scott Boehm

The wide, effervescent smile that once defined Denard Robinson as much as his lightning-quick feet isn't as omnipresent as it once was.

The grin is still part of the package, evidence that the Michigan quarterback is as calm as on the first play from scrimmage in his career, when he turned a mishandled snap into a improvisational touchdown sprint.

But time, along with self-analysis and refinement, has changed Robinson.

The once shy personality has been replaced with an assertive demeanor. Once all smiles, Robinson is now businesslike and focused.

Although outside criticism persists, suggesting he doesn't have what it takes to play quarterback at the next level, Robinson remains focused on what time he has left in Ann Arbor. That would be the job description for his senior season, which requires him to take charge and hold his teammates accountable. That is, to be less of a pupil and more of a teacher.

"He's taking on more of a leadership role, and that's something that's exciting for me," offensive coordinator Al Borges said. "That's exciting for all of us."

Once more comfortable in the back of the room, Robinson is at now the head of the pack, willing to step to the forefront to help deliver the Wolverines' first Big Ten championship since 2004.

"I don't do a lot of yelling and patting people on the butt," Robinson said. "Sometimes, you have to get up in them, help them out and give them encouragement.

"You can't always be nice to them — I can't always have a smile on my face."

That face has also been the face of Michigan football since he took over at quarterback in 2010. The facial expressions have evolved over time.

Last season, a change in offensive philosophy changed Robinson's main duties, challenging him to run less and evolve into a more complete quarterback.

But there were growing pains. As Michigan flourished during an 11-2 season, capped by a Sugar Bowl victory, Robinson struggled with consistency. Despite flashes of brilliance, Robinson completed only 55 percent of his passes and was intercepted 15 times.

"That's not acceptable as a quarterback," Robinson said.

Borges, who adjusted his philosophies to accommodate Robinson's skills, impressed on his star quarterback that things had to change: It's time to eliminate turnovers and connect on more passes.

"He's made a marked improvement," Borges said. "There are still errors here and there, but they're less. As he goes and understands better and better, you're going to get a better product."

And when he doesn't meet the standard, it's Robinson — not Borges — who does the correcting.

With the extra effort, Robinson became more decisive and improved his accuracy, cutting down how much he threw off his back foot.

He also took a step forward as a leader.

The trait isn't one that comes naturally to the normally soft-spoken Robinson, whose teammates once struggled to understand him in the huddle. But over time, he made an impression on those around him.

"He has been more outgoing this season," receiver Roy Roundtree said. "Being a quarterback, that's what it takes, because everyone is looking up to the quarterback. We take real impact in being a senior and taking leadership — just like (last year's) seniors did.

"We're just trying to accomplish something better."

For Robinson, making his team better means making himself better. While remaining the focal point of his team and the school's resident Big Man On Campus — even earning him a shout-out from visiting President Barack Obama — Robinson has made self-improvement a main priority.

Both as a quarterback and a leader.

Ask how much his passing has improved, and Robinson characterizes the change as night and day. Bring up his tendency to be more vocal, and his all-business persona appears, understanding it's now part of who he is.

"I'm taking on a leadership role, trying to be the best quarterback I can be for the team," Robinson said. "Right now, I'm just trying to get better at everything."

And that's got everyone around him smiling from ear to ear.

— Jeff Arnold

TOP QUARTERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Matt Barkley**	Sr.	USC
	Enters season with 9,054 passing yards, 80 TDs ... and looking for a ring.		
2.	**Denard Robinson**	Sr.	Michigan
	Who cares if he might not be a next-level QB? He's a thrill-maker.		
3.	**Tyler Wilson**	Sr.	Arkansas
	Sky's the limit, but his two lowest passing days came vs. LSU, Bama.		
4.	**Geno Smith**	Sr.	West Virginia
	Facing better competition, but a repeat (4,385 yards, 31 TDs) is doable.		
5.	**Landry Jones**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	Has 12,379 career yards and something to prove after late-season slump.		
6.	**Aaron Murray**	Jr.	Georgia
	With 35 TD passes, just needs 14 to set Georgia school record.		
7.	**Collin Klein**	Sr.	Kansas State
	Such a dynamic runner, we almost put him on our all-purpose list.		
8.	**Tajh Boyd**	Jr.	Clemson
	The All-ACC QB is just scratching his potential after 33-TD season.		
9.	**Tyler Bray**	Jr.	Tennessee
	Has the arm that makes scouts drool ... now, he needs to win a big game.		
10.	**Logan Thomas**	Jr.	Virginia Tech
	The one-time reluctant QB set school mark with 3,482 total yards in '11.		
11.	**Keith Price**	Jr.	Washington
	More than kept pace with RG III in wild, wild Alamo Bowl loss.		
12.	**James Franklin**	Jr.	Missouri
	Had 3,846 total yards last year in Big 12. What's the SEC conversion rate?		
13.	**AJ McCarron**	Jr.	Alabama
	If Saban says the word, title-winning QB can carry more of the load.		
14.	**Casey Pachall**	Jr.	TCU
	Super debut as starter (2,911 yards, 25 TDs), with top WRs coming back.		
15.	**EJ Manuel**	Sr.	Florida State
	Never got launched as full-time starter last year (injuries, inconsistent).		
16.	**Bryn Renner**	Jr.	North Carolina
	Strong, accurate thrower led ACC in passing efficiency (159.4 rating).		
17.	**Braxton Miller**	So.	Ohio State
	Urban says he loves Miller's "work ethic" ... and about 100 other things.		
18.	**Taylor Martinez**	Jr.	Nebraska
	If he truly has fixed some of the deficiencies in his throwing motion ...		
19.	**Seth Doege**	Sr.	Texas Tech
	Huge numbers, but tailed off in the second half of the season.		
20.	**Jeff Tuel**	Sr.	Washington State
	Betting he holds off Connor Halliday for the keys to Leach's attack.		
21.	**Mike Glennon**	Sr.	NC State
	Big finish gave him 31 TDs passes; only Philip Rivers had more at State.		
22.	**Alex Carder**	Sr.	Western Michigan
	Carrying the flag for MAC QBs; averaged 322.8 yards per game in 2011.		
23.	**Derek Carr**	Jr.	Fresno State
	David Carr's kid bro should thrive in more of a spread look for 'Dogs.		
24.	**Connor Shaw**	Jr.	South Carolina
	Went 8-1 as starter, got better in read-option, didn't vex Spurrier.		
25.	**Zach Mettenberger**	Jr.	LSU
	Maybe he belongs on list, maybe not. Will be fascinating, either way.		

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PLAYER RATINGS

RUNNING BACKS

Ball returns to be better than last year's No. 1 RB

Nobody came up to his face and said it, but Montee Ball knows some people were tempted to do so.

When the Wisconsin running back made the surprising decision to return for his senior year, he read and heard a lot of comments about what a huge mistake he was making.

How could he possibly improve on his 2011 season, when he was a Heisman Trophy finalist and led the Badgers to a second straight Rose Bowl? What about the risk of injury? Didn't he know running backs have notoriously short NFL shelf lives and shouldn't waste carries at the college level?

In announcing his decision to return, Ball admitted he was making "a pretty huge gamble."

MONTEE BALL

Photo by Joe Robbins

While he knew all of the arguments against returning, they were trumped by two things he couldn't get out of his mind.

The first was outdoing an NFL Draft evaluation that projected him as a third-round pick. "I do believe I'm better than the third round," he said.

The second was the four-year commitment he made to the Badgers when he signed.

"My character speaks for itself," Ball said in the spring. "I'm true to my word. That's why I decided to stay here and help this team win. I signed a letter of intent to stay (four years)."

Ball told the running backs of his decision the day before the Rose Bowl, then informed the rest of the team in the locker room, following the heartbreaking 45-38 loss to Oregon.

For a while, it appeared as if Ball might be the only one returning. Six assistant coaches bolted for new jobs in January. Wisconsin sent a school-record eight players to the scouting combine, the second-highest total of any school in the country.

But Ball placed his trust in Badgers coach Bret Bielema and weathered the turmoil. Bielema found new coaches, and the Badgers go into the season hoping to make school history with a third consecutive Big Ten title.

"From day one, when I told (Bielema) to his face, I decided to stay, I had a lot of faith in him — and I still do," Ball said. "He picked the right coaches. They're really doing a great job finding a bunch of young players who are going to help us."

Ball's show of faith was a strong declaration about the program's direction. He also backed up his vow to get better with his performance in winter workouts. Strength coaches set up six individual stations, where players competed one-on-one in a variety of agility drills. Ball went undefeated.

"He was challenged more than anybody," running backs coach Thomas Hammock said. "He won every one. He was always at the front of the line, pushing the guys."

Ball worked in the spring to polish minor flaws in his game, focusing on pass protection and becoming even more explosive out of cuts.

"What I've seen right here (in the spring), Montee will be a better player," Bielema said.

Ball led the nation with 1,923 rushing yards last season, and his 39 total touchdowns tied the NCAA record set by Barry Sanders in 1988. Bielema said Ball could be a better all-around player in 2012, even if he doesn't match his gaudy 2011 statistics.

"He's not trying to produce the same numbers," Bielema said. "He's not trying to do anything other than try to win football games and play his best football."

And those critics, who said he was crazy for coming back? They provide even more motivation for Ball's relentless pursuit of improvement.

"It's a lot of fuel," he said.

Hammock tells his players, "The enemy of great is being good." Ball refuses to be satisfied and is determined to drag his teammates along with him.

"That's what I'm striving to be — great," he said. "You don't know how hard I'm going to work and how hard I'm going to push these players to make this thing work. You never know what a player is capable of doing."

— Tom Mulhern

TOP RUNNING BACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Montee Ball**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	A 2011 Heisman finalist after rushing for 1,923 yards and 33 TDs.		
2.	**Marcus Lattimore**	Jr.	South Carolina
	Let's assume a healthy knee; punishing runner will rip through SEC.		
3.	**Knile Davis**	Jr.	Arkansas
	Remember, he had 1,028 yards in final seven games of 2010 season.		
4.	**Ray Graham**	Sr.	Pittsburgh
	Was nation's second-leading rusher before knee injury at midseason.		
5.	**Joseph Randle**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	Scatback seeks same open spaces with new weapons at QB, WR.		
6.	**Giovani Bernard**	So.	North Carolina
	All-ACC freshman had 1,253 yards and 13 touchdowns.		
7.	**Fitzgerald Toussaint**	Jr.	Michigan
	Ready to build off sensational second half of the 2011 season.		
8.	**Stepfan Taylor**	Sr.	Stanford
	Had "quiet" consecutive 1,000-yard seasons in Andrew Luck's shadow.		
9.	**Robbie Rouse**	Sr.	Fresno State
	Big-time workhorse; carried 36 times for 169 yards vs. Nebraska.		
10.	**Andre Ellington**	Sr.	Clemson
	Rushed for 1,178 yards last season; needs a full year of health.		
11.	**Rex Burkhead**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Not as flashy as some, but he's good for north of 1,300 yards again.		
12.	**John White IV**	Sr.	Utah
	As a JC transfer last season, set a school record with 1,519 rushing yards.		
13.	**Kenjon Barner**	Sr.	Oregon
	Main man now? Went for 939 yards and 11 TDs as backup last season.		
14.	**Eddie Lacy**	Jr.	Alabama
	From Mark Ingram to Trent Richardson ... and here's the next Bama star.		
15.	**Zach Line**	Sr.	SMU
	Rushed for at least 82 yards in all 10 games before injury late in 2011.		
16.	**Zac Stacy**	Sr.	Vanderbilt
	The SEC's leading returning rusher; darted for 1,193 yards, 14 TDs.		
17.	**Christine Michael**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	Oft-injured and coming off ACL tear, but his ceiling is as high as any.		
18.	**Cierre Wood**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Bigger focus of offense with QB in transition; 1,102 rushing yards in 2011.		
19.	**Silas Redd**	Jr.	Penn State
	Needs to be a constant for Lions amid change to Bill O'Brien's offense.		
20.	**Isaiah Crowell**	So.	Georgia
	Touted recruit was SEC Freshman of the Year with 850 yards.		
21.	**Curtis McNeal**	Sr.	USC
	Bulked up to help durability; averaged 6.9 yards a carry last year.		
22.	**Le'Veon Bell**	Jr.	Michigan State
	Potential for more carries after 948 yards, 13 TDs in a time-share.		
23.	**Onterio McCalebb**	Sr.	Auburn
	Little guy can do it all, and should get a bigger workload this season.		
24.	**Perry Jones**	Sr.	Virginia
	His pass-catching skills (48 receptions last year) help set him apart.		
25.	**LSU's quartet**	n/a	LSU
	Take your pick: Michael Ford, Spencer Ware, Kenny Hilliard, Alfred Blue.		

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PLAYER RATINGS

RECEIVERS

'The Robert Factor' keeps Trojans looking downfield

ROBERT WOODS

Photo by John Pyle

USC wide receiver Robert Woods was a consensus All-American and finalist for the Biletnikoff Award last season, but if he needs motivation for his junior season, he needs to look no further than the comments of his coach, Lane Kiffin.

The day after USC defeated UCLA, 50-0, in the season-finale, Kiffin said Woods was "the second-best receiver" on the team, behind Marqise Lee.

TOP WIDE RECEIVERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Robert Woods**	Jr.	USC
	Can line up anywhere and create a mismatch; 111 catches last year.		
2.	**Sammy Watkins**	So.	Clemson
	Freshman season: 82 catches for 1,219 yards and 12 touchdowns.		
3.	**Keenan Allen**	Jr.	Cal
	Had 98 catches for 1,342 yards last season with half-brother at QB.		
4.	**Marquess Wilson**	Jr.	Washington State
	Uneven spring, but big-play guy has to be the focus of Mike Leach attack.		
5.	**Marqise Lee**	So.	USC
	So dangerous after the catch; should become an all-time USC great.		
6.	**Justin Hunter**	Jr.	Tennessee
	Last season's torn ACL won't stop him from becoming SEC's best.		
7.	**Kenny Stills**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Maturing player with big personality and Ryan Broyles' shoes to fill.		
8.	**Tavon Austin**	Sr.	West Virginia
	Inside WR had great spring after four-TD game vs. Clemson in bowl game.		
9.	**Cobi Hamilton**	Sr.	Arkansas
	Numbers will soar as Tyler Wilson's primary target this time around.		
10.	**Terrance Williams**	Sr.	Baylor
	A playmaker for the new QB: 59 catches, 957 yards, 11 TDs in '11.		
11.	**Da'Rick Rogers**	Jr.	Tennessee
	First-round potential, but has had his share of off-field problems.		
12.	**Stedman Bailey**	Jr.	West Virginia
	Gotta love his speed, playmaking (12 TDs) and 17.8 yards per catch.		
13.	**Malcolm Mitchell**	So.	Georgia
	Look good in the spring ... at corner? No worries, will catch plenty as WR.		
14.	**Ryan Swope**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	Can he replicate 89 catches, 1,207 yards without Tannehill ... and in SEC?		
15.	**DeAndre Hopkins**	Jr.	Clemson
	Dabbled in hoops, focused on football now; 124 catches in two years.		
16.	**Tavarres King**	Sr.	Georgia
	Has a gear that can go get plenty of deep passes from Aaron Murray.		
17.	**Josh Boyce**	Jr.	TCU
	Came up big vs. Boise last season; finished 2011 with 998 yards, nine TDs.		
18.	**Emory Blake**	Sr.	Auburn
	Deep threat averaged 17.0 yards per catch last season.		
19.	**Conner Vernon**	Sr.	Duke
	Only player in ACC history with multiple seasons of 70-plus catches.		
20.	**Odell Beckham**	So.	LSU
	LSU's new go-to guy will run down deep balls from Zach Mettenberger.		

TOP TIGHT ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Tyler Eifert**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Earned some All-America honors last season (63 catches, 803 yards).		
2.	**Philip Lutzenkirchen**	Sr.	Auburn
	Makes the circus catches, blocks and comes through in the clutch.		
3.	**Jacob Pedersen**	Jr.	Wisconsin
	Made eight TD catches last season and is blossoming as a blocker.		
4.	**Austin Seferian-Jenkins**	So.	Washington
	Terrific athlete who also played Husky hoops; ready for monster season.		
5.	**Jake Stoneburner**	Sr.	Ohio State
	Remember Aaron Hernandez at Florida for Meyer? That's Stoneburner.		

*Not rated due to spring suspension: Darius Johnson, SMU

It was an odd comment. Woods set the conference receiving record (111), and led the team in receiving yards (1,292) and touchdown catches (15).

Yet, in the Trojans' rout of the Bruins, while Woods was catching 12 passes, Lee was catching 13. While Woods was amassing 113 yards and two touchdowns, Lee was piling up 224 yards and two scores. On that night, Lee was unbelievable.

"I respect what Coach Kiffin said," Woods said. "I just want to be healthy and 100 percent this year. Then I can show everyone what I'm capable of doing when I'm pain free."

Woods, you see, played with an ankle injury that bothered him the *entire* season. Even with the bad ankle, Woods did things most receivers fail to do with two healthy wheels. Just one example: He caught a short pass against Arizona and turned it into an 82-yard touchdown en route to 255 yards receiving against the Wildcats.

"He makes a lot of plays that make me look good," USC quarterback Matt Barkley said. "He's really easy to play with because he is always where he needs to be. I can depend on him every play if I need to. We have a special relationship that way."

Having an experienced playmaker like Woods, and an up-and-comer like Lee, gave Barkley two reasons to come back for his senior season.

From his first day at USC, Woods displayed special tendencies, walking everywhere with his playbook and learning the offense faster than the other freshmen. He and Barkley were immediately on the same page.

"We always had our timing down," Woods said. "It's like playing catch with someone. It's real natural."

Woods underwent ankle surgery after last season and, to ensure he is healthy this year, did not participate in spring practice.

With teams now worried about Lee, it might be impossible to double-team Woods. The duo's combined receptions (184) and receiving yards (2,435) were the most by a pair of USC receivers in a single season.

Kiffin called opposing teams' double-coverage "The Robert Factor."

"He helps us in ways I don't think people understand," Kiffin said. "Even if he only has eight receptions in a game, they're trying to take him away and it's allowing all these other guys to make plays."

Woods opened the season catching a school-record 17 passes against Minnesota, drawing ever-increasing attention from defenses.

"What's really amazing, even after all the attention they gave him, he had 33 catches in the first three games," Kiffin said.

But Woods is not just one of the nation's top receivers, he's one of the hungriest.

"There were times when Coach Kiffin said I might not play in games (because of injuries)," Woods said. "I remember everyone wanted to know if I would play against Oregon. I knew I would play. But I also knew I wasn't at my best.

"I have no doubts I will be at my best this year."

Whatever Woods does, the big question for USC fans is whether Woods will return for his senior season in 2013?

"If the NFL is there, of course you have to look into it," Woods said. "But Matt and (safety) T.J. McDonald set the standard, returning for their senior year. Me and (linebacker) Dion Bailey and a lot of guys were talking. That should be the new trend, getting your degree."

If that is what Woods really thinks, Kiffin will have no problems bestowing any title the wide receiver wants.

— Scott Wolf

PLAYER RATINGS

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

Aggies tackle is no joke to opponents

After graduating a semester early from Arlington (Texas) High, offensive lineman Luke Joeckel — perhaps the biggest prize of Texas A&M's 2010 recruiting class — enrolled in January 2010, along with his twin brother Matt, a quarterback prospect for the Aggies.

TOP CENTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Barrett Jones**	Sr.	Alabama
	Outland Trophy winner takes on a new position on Bama's talented OL.		
2.	**Dalton Freeman**	Sr.	Clemson
	All-ACC center has started 36 games in his career.		
3.	**Khaled Holmes**	Sr.	USC
	How about an All-American combination at QB and center for USC?		
4.	**Ben Habern**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	Missed spring with neck injury but will be back to help lead standout OL.		
5.	**Joe Madsen**	Sr.	West Virginia
	Hasn't missed a start in his career; led team in knockdown blocks in '11.		
6.	**Travis Swanson**	Jr.	Arkansas
	Will be third-year starter; the up-front centerpiece for a prolific offense.		
7.	**T.J. Johnson**	Sr.	South Carolina
	Started all 40 games of career, with postseason awards along the way.		
8.	**Braxston Cave**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Missing last four games helped him decide to return for fifth year.		

TOP GUARDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Chance Warmack**	Sr.	Alabama
	Even with Barrett Jones at center, Warmack might be Bama's best OL.		
2.	**Omoregie Uzzi**	Sr.	Georgia Tech
	Earned All-ACC honors and checked out draft status before returning.		
3.	**Gabe Ikard**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Also excelled at center when Ben Habern was out last season.		
4.	**Alvin Bailey**	Jr.	Arkansas
	Was in the doghouse in the spring ... but has All-SEC talent.		
5.	**Larry Warford**	Sr.	Kentucky
	Two-time second-team selection to the All-SEC team.		
6.	**Jonathan Cooper**	Sr.	North Carolina
	Was rated NFLDraftScout's No. 1 senior OG prospect in spring.		
7.	**Chris McDonald**	Sr.	Michigan State
	Athletic lineman whose brother, Nick, has spent past two years in NFL.		
8.	**Lane Taylor**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	With 36 career starts, leads a revamped line in front of freshman QB.		

TOP TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Alex Hurst**	Sr.	LSU
	A coaches' All-SEC selection who mans the right side for the Tigers.		
2.	**Luke Joeckel**	Jr.	Texas A&M
	Huge potential will be tested by the big and speedy SEC pass rushers.		
3.	**Ricky Wagner**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	Has nicely followed in LT footsteps of Joe Thomas and Gabe Carimi.		
4.	**Chris Faulk**	Jr.	LSU
	Should be a eying a first-round draft grade with a big junior year.		
5.	**Taylor Lewan**	Jr.	Michigan
	Kid with big personality who is drawing comparisons to UM greats.		
6.	**Oday Aboushi**	Sr.	Virginia
	Cavs have had three first-round OTs since 2006 ... one more?		
7.	**D.J. Fluker**	Jr.	Alabama
	Might have most potential on OT list; looking lean at a scant 350 pounds.		
8.	**Justin Pugh**	Sr.	Syracuse
	All-Big East performer; has blocked for two different 1,000-yard RBs.		

LUKE JOECKEL

Photo by Doug Holleman

With Jerrod Johnson and Ryan Tannehill entrenched at quarterback entering the spring of 2010, Matt Joeckel had no illusions of playing early in his collegiate career. Because of deficiencies in the offensive line, however, Luke was regarded as a likely candidate to work his way into the starting lineup as a true freshman ... at the high-profile spot of left tackle, no less.

But when spring ball started, Joeckel was embarrassed on the practice field. His hopes of starting immediately — as well as most of his long-term dreams — were initially dashed when he could rarely even *touch* the rush linebacker in front of him.

"It was a joke, but it wasn't funny to me," the well-spoken Joeckel recalled. "I was right out of high school trying to make a big impression, and there were many times I couldn't even touch the guy.

"I'm dead serious. I remember thinking, 'Man, is this the kind of talent I'm going to see every week in the Big 12?' I was pretty happy when we started playing games and realized that not everybody I faced was like Von Miller."

Well, yeah. Miller, remember, led the nation in sacks in 2009, won the Butkus Award in 2010, and was the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2011 after a stellar debut season with the Denver Broncos. Additionally, Miller may have placed Joeckel on the fast track in terms of his development as an offensive lineman.

"My freshman year was hard, especially in terms of just getting used to the speed compared to high school," Joeckel said. "But blocking Von Miller in spring practices helped me a ton. I had a lot of offside penalties when I first came in, but after four or five games, I started getting better."

Joeckel, a 6-6, 315-pound left tackle, soon realized that nobody else could block Miller one-on-one, consistently, either. So upon starting all 13 games as a true freshman in 2010, Joeckel struggled at times, but made major strides as the Aggies won their last six regular-season games before falling to LSU in the Cotton Bowl.

Joeckel continued his impressive development as a sophomore, emerging as the premier player on an offensive line that allowed the fewest sacks (nine) in the Big 12 in 2011.

"I felt much more comfortable last year," he said. "This year, I plan on getting better and better and building on what I've done so far."

Joeckel and fellow junior right tackle Jake Matthews, son of NFL Hall of Famer Bruce Matthews, form one of the most impressive tackle tandems in Texas A&M history. As the Aggies prepare to enter the SEC in 2012, the offensive line is undoubtedly the team's strength.

Joeckel says he is fully aware that dominant defensive line play has been one of the key characteristics of the premier teams in the SEC for many years. Nevertheless, Joeckel is confident he is prepared for anything or anyone he will face this year and beyond.

"Going to the SEC, we are playing against the best competition in the country, and it is a league known for its great defensive linemen," said Joeckel, whose father, David, was an offensive lineman at Texas Tech.

"But I am looking forward to that challenge. Jake and I are looking forward to going against those great defensive ends in the SEC. Personally, I feel like I've already played against the best of the best in Von.

"That guy is a total freak in a good way, and I was not surprised at all that he was the Defensive Rookie of the Year. He really helped me develop in a hurry and prepared me for whatever I'll face next."

— Rusty Burson

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

For LSU's Montgomery, it's 'all about the mindset,' and more

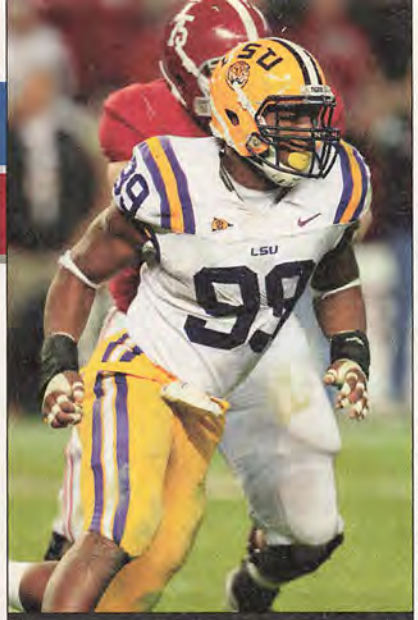

Photo by Bruce L. Schwartzman

SAM MONTGOMERY

In the quest to become "a great LSU player," junior right defensive end Sam Montgomery said it takes "a dominant defensive mentality. ... It's all about mindset."

If that were the only requirement, there would be no shortage of "great LSU players."

Then, again, given the talent-rich depth of the Tigers, it could be argued they don't lack for great players. Yet, only a select few stand out from the rest, and that's where Montgomery fits in.

Not only is he strong "between the ears," which is how he classified the proper mental disposition, he has the physical ability to become an NFL first-round draft choice. At 6-4, 245 pounds, he has the size to disrupt the opposition and the speed and footwork to create havoc.

What's more, he works diligently to enhance those physical skills.

Defensive coordinator John Chavis said Montgomery "brings some special things to our defense in terms of a guy who can play the run well and also rush the passer."

Montgomery's statistics support that claim. Last season, he registered a team-high nine sacks, the third-highest total in the Southeastern Conference. That matched the fourth best single-season total in school history.

His 13.5 tackles for losses ranked fourth in the SEC. He finished with 49 tackles overall, tops among LSU's returning linemen.

No wonder he was selected first-team All-America by the Football Writers of America, and was a Ted Hendricks Defensive End of the Year finalist.

Montgomery considered jumping early to the NFL, but decided against it because he wanted to earn his degree next spring. He also wanted to help his young backups prepare to start when he does leave.

Besides, in the meantime, he's enjoying himself and college. He redshirted his first year and then started the first five games of 2010 before his season was cut short by a knee injury. He had 18 tackles with two sacks, leading coaches to name him to the SEC All-Freshman Team.

Then came his dominant redshirt sophomore season. As much as he has accomplished, he has only 16 starts in his career, so an additional year of experience is likely to help him in the eyes of the NFL.

He'll team with Barkevious Mingo, LSU's other starting junior defensive end, to keep the Tigers among the nation's best defenses. They ranked second last season, limiting foes to just 261.5 yards and 11.3 points per game.

"We haven't lost a beat," Montgomery said. "The front looks good. We just need to step it up some. We'll work on that during the summer."

Namely, LSU has to be just a notch better than Alabama, which edged the Tigers in both defensive statistical categories and embarrassed them in the BCS national championship game, 21-0. LSU stopped Alabama in overtime during the regular season, 9-6, but was no match for the Crimson Tide in the postseason.

Montgomery said he and his teammates have moved on. "January 9th was put to bed a long time ago."

He did add a qualifier to that statement: "It's been in our minds. But just as a reminder that for every game you have to be ready for every last moment. ... As far as the bad taste in my mouth, I just look forward to the next time we play them."

That would be Nov. 3 in Tiger Stadium. There will be plenty of football to play before then, and LSU will need Montgomery performing as well as ever to handle the rigors of the SEC.

Montgomery has paid special attention to his hand work and his quickness off the line, saying he's committed to doing whatever necessary to finish his college career right.

That would entail finishing off the season one game better than last season ... which is where *Lindy's* ranks the Tigers heading into the fall.

— Dave Moormann

TOP DEFENSIVE ENDS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Sam Montgomery**	Jr.	LSU
	Was a FWAA first-team All-American after posting nine sacks on great D.		
2.	**Brandon Jenkins**	Sr.	Florida State
	Has helped lead resurgence of FSU D with 36.5 career tackles for loss.		
3.	**William Gholston**	Jr.	Michigan State
	Reminiscent of former Spartan Julian Peterson ... freakishly athletic.		
4.	**Alex Okafor**	Sr.	Texas
	Big Oak was first-team All-Big 12 with 14 TFLs, including seven sacks.		
5.	**Joe Vellano**	Sr.	Maryland
	Great motor; moving to end in 3-4 look. Would rate even higher at DT.		
6.	**Barkevious Mingo**	Jr.	LSU
	Almost unfairly quick off the edge, had five QB hurries in SEC title game.		
7.	**Stansly Maponga**	Jr.	TCU
	Another great TCU pass rusher; nine sacks and five forced fumbles in '11.		
8.	**Jadeveon Clowney**	So.	South Carolina
	Nation's best recruit in 2011 playing like he wants to be top pick in 2014.		
9.	**James Gayle**	Jr.	Virginia Tech
	Has potential to be as good a defender as there is in the ACC.		
10.	**Corey Lemonier**	Jr.	Auburn
	Tigers' defense starts with Lemonier (9.5 sacks, five forced fumbles).		
11.	**John Simon**	Sr.	Ohio State
	Has 28 career tackles for loss and leads Urban's talented D-line.		
12.	**Jackson Jeffcoat**	Jr.	Texas
	Rangy and sudden off the line, as his 21 TFLs last season suggest.		
13.	**Dion Jordan**	Sr.	Oregon
	Just like the rest of the Ducks: Built for speed and looking for a mismatch.		
14.	**Devin Taylor**	Sr.	South Carolina
	At 6-7, has a huge wingspan to get in QB's air space; six sacks last year.		

TOP DEFENSIVE TACKLES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Kawann Short**	Sr.	Purdue
	Has rare quickness, pass-rush skills for interior lineman (17 TFLs).		
2.	**Star Lotulelei**	Sr.	Utah
	Was voted by Pac-12 offensive linemen as the league's best DL last year.		
3.	**Jonathan Hankins**	Jr.	Ohio State
	Made 67 tackles last season and had a big spring for new coaches.		
4.	**John Jenkins**	Sr.	Georgia
	At 351 pounds, he is the classic immovable object on the D-line.		
5.	**Aaron Donald**	Jr.	Pittsburgh
	Moved around the front last year when he had 16 TFLs and 11 sacks.		
6.	**Jesse Williams**	Sr.	Alabama
	Won't be a big stats guy, but invaluable as Bama's new man in middle.		
7.	**Bennie Logan**	Jr.	LSU
	Made 57 tackles for the nation's second-best defense in 2011.		
8.	**Nikita Whitlock**	Jr.	Wake Forest
	Not the prototype: He's 5-11, 260, and just zips past interior linemen.		
9.	**Baker Steinkuhler**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Son of Nebraska legend has been good; senior season could be special.		
10.	**Jordan Hill**	Sr.	Penn State
	Coach Bill O'Brien says Hill is one of better DTs he's been around.		

PLAYER RATINGS

LINEBACKERS

Rare talent has Irish looking for rare season

Notre Dame defensive coordinator Bob Diaco knows linebackers such as Manti Te'o only come around every so often.

Diaco says the only defensive player he has been around that compares to Te'o is Chris Long, the former Virginia star and current St. Louis Rams defensive end.

"He was unique," said Diaco, who coached linebackers and was special teams coordinator at Virginia from 2006 to 2008. "I hadn't been around someone like him before or since Manti. It's like every 10 years, 20 years."

MANTI TE'O

Photo by Robin Alam/Icon SMI

Te'o has been special — or as Diaco calls him, "rare" — since he arrived at Notre Dame as the nation's No. 1 defensive prospect out of high school.

The 6-2, 255-pound senior started 10 of 12 games as a freshman and recorded 63 tackles and 5.5 tackles for loss.

He followed up by more than doubling his tackles as a sophomore — 133, including 9.5 for loss, as he started every game.

Te'o continued to rack up impressive numbers as a junior, notching 128 stops with 13.5 for loss. And he added another element — sacks.

After recording only two sacks in his first two seasons, Te'o had five last year.

"I can improve on everything as a leader, as a football player," Te'o said. "I can just improve on everything and in every facet of my game."

There was no guarantee Te'o was going to give Notre Dame all four years of his eligibility. He contemplated entering the NFL Draft after the Irish finished 8-5 for a second straight season and lost 18-14 to Florida State in the Champs Sports Bowl.

He was projected as high as a first-round draft selection, but he didn't want to leave Notre Dame without his degree or feeling like he gave the university and football program everything he has.

"I'm just going to try to maximize everything I got, maximize my potential," Te'o said. "I'm going to make sure that when I leave here I can honestly say I gave it my all."

But while he gives it his all, Te'o understands that being one of the most high-profile players at Notre Dame can create some unwanted attention. He said he will block out bad thoughts as he plays his final college season.

"Honestly, it's a lot of pressure, and sometimes it's pressure you don't want," Te'o said. "Sometimes it carries over to your family, and people say stuff about your family.

"It hurts. You are just a regular 21-year-old, who has loving parents, and people are saying stuff about you and your family. It comes with the territory I guess.

"You always have to keep a clear mind and remember who you are and do what you do. And not pay attention to all the critics and guys who praise you. You have to stay focused, level-headed, and you will be fine."

Te'o returns to a defense that has plenty of talent, even after emerging star defensive end Aaron Lynch left the program during spring practice. Lynch said he wanted to return home to south Florida.

Notre Dame's defensive line features ends Stephon Tuitt and Kapron Lewis-Moore and nose guard Louis Nix III. Te'o will be joined in the linebacker rotation by Dan Fox, Carlo Calabrese, Ishaq Williams and Danny Spond.

In addition, safeties Jamoris Slaughter and Zeke Motta will keep the defensive backfield strong, as new cornerbacks Lo Wood, Josh Atkinson and Bennett Jackson settle in.

With a strong supporting cast, Te'o says he is thinking of only one thing in his final season — going out on top.

"I just want to win," Te'o said. "I want to do whatever it takes to win. I know I have guys around me, and this team wants to win. It's a special team. I'm not just saying that because it is my senior year."

— Tony Krausz

TOP INSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Manti Te'o**	Sr.	Notre Dame
	Hasn't disappointed on or off field. Career: 324 tackles, 28.5 for loss.		
2.	**A.J. Klein**	Sr.	Iowa State
	Co-Big 12 Defensive POY; had 14 tackles in upset of Oklahoma State.		
3.	**Chris Borland**	Jr.	Wisconsin
	The best middle linebacker in Big Ten ... again (143 tackles, 19 for loss).		
4.	**Arthur Brown**	Sr.	Kansas State
	Ex-Miami Hurricane flew around for 101 stops in all-league season.		
5.	**C.J. Mosley**	Jr.	Alabama
	Former Freshman All-American will be a star in an expanded role.		
6.	**Kevin Reddick**	Sr.	North Carolina
	Vocal leader could be another first-round defender from Carolina.		
7.	**Alec Ogletree**	Jr.	Georgia
	Be hard-pressed to find a quicker ILB; 52 tackles in eight games in '11.		
8.	**Nico Johnson**	Sr.	Alabama
	Hasn't had the full playing time to post big numbers ... but he will.		
9.	**James Morris**	Jr.	Iowa
	Made 110 tackles last season while splitting time inside and outside.		
10.	**Shayne Skov**	Sr.	Stanford
	ACL rehab was coming along fine in the spring; tough, tenacious player.		

TOP OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Jarvis Jones**	Sr.	Georgia
	Big plays get noticed (13.5 sacks, 19.5 TFLs), but he's a complete package.		
2.	**Gerald Hodges**	Sr.	Penn State
	Former safety has great instincts moving forward and backward.		
3.	**Chase Thomas**	Sr.	Stanford
	Great size and pass-rushing ability off the edge (8.5 sacks last year).		
4.	**Khaseem Greene**	Sr.	Rutgers
	Big East co-Defensive Player of the Year after league-leading 141 stops.		
5.	**Jonathan Brown**	Jr.	Illinois
	Final seven games: 78 tackles, 13.5 for loss, four sacks, two recoveries.		
6.	**Mike Taylor**	Sr.	Wisconsin
	First-team All-Big Ten player who made 150 tackles last season.		
7.	**Jake Knott**	Sr.	Iowa State
	Returning All-Big 12 player is physical, tough; has 268 career tackles.		
8.	**Jelani Jenkins**	Jr.	Florida
	Fits the profile as athletic linebacker who should be making huge plays.		
9.	**Denicos Allen**	Jr.	Michigan State
	A playmaker (11 sacks, 18.5 TFLs) on excellent Michigan State defense.		
10.	**Sean Porter**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	Porter (17 TFLs, 9.5 sacks) and DE Damontre Moore fit in fine in SEC.		
11.	**Kenny Tate**	Sr.	Maryland
	2010 All-ACC safety returning from ACL injury suffered in the 2011 season.		
12.	**A.J. Johnson**	So.	Tennessee
	Made 80 tackles en route to consensus Freshman All-America honors.		
13.	**Dion Bailey**	So.	USC
	Ready for bigger honors after being Pac-12 Defensive Freshman POY.		
14.	**Shaun Lewis**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	An impact player from the start, with 17.5 career tackles for loss.		

PLAYER RATINGS

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Wolfpack craving a replay of Amerson's baker's dozen

The replay looped on the videoboard at Carter-Finley Stadium during North Carolina State's spring game.

There was Wolfpack cornerback David Amerson's 65-yard interception return in the Belk Bowl ... three times, three different angles, played over and over. Every time it was a touchdown.

It was Amerson's favorite interception of a conference-record 13 in 2011.

"That's a tough one to top," Amerson said of the big play against Louisville.

Photo by Jeff Siner/Charlotte Observer/MCT

DAVID AMERSON

"It was for the (ACC) record; it went for a touchdown, and it helped us win the game."

Amerson, who didn't have an interception as a freshman, had two in the 31-24 bowl victory. The pick-six in the third quarter became the deciding points in the game and eclipsed former North Carolina cornerback Dre Bly's conference mark of 11 interceptions from 1996.

Amerson added one more interception on Louisville's final possession of the game to give him 13 for the season. Al Worley of Washington is the only player in Division I-A history with more, 14 in 1968.

That kind of a season would be tough for anyone to top. What do you do for an encore after breaking a 73-year-old school record, setting a conference record, and leading the country in interceptions?

It's a question the junior from Greensboro, N.C., has already thought about in a whirlwind offseason of collecting All-American honors and the Jack Tatum Award as the nation's top defensive back.

First things first for Amerson: Stay humble. The bright-eyed, soft-spoken, under-recruited local product gets more attention on campus — and some good-natured trash talk from his teammates — but he's focused on following up his spectacular 2011 season.

"As quick as you go up, you can go down," Amerson said. "I have to have the same hungry attitude. I can't be satisfied with where I'm at."

Amerson attributes his success to his soft hands — he played receiver in high school — and a knack for the ball. If he can touch the ball, it's usually his. At 6-3, he's tall for a corner, but he still has quick feet and good hip turn, qualities the best cover corners have.

It's the combination of all the qualities — the athletic ability and the IQ — that makes Amerson so successful, NC State coach Tom O'Brien said.

"He has a great feel for the game and a great sense of anticipation," O'Brien said.

Plus, the coach added: "He just has a knack for making plays."

Amerson's attitude is even more impressive to O'Brien. After the season, Amerson's teammates voted him team MVP. When he stood up for the acceptance speech, he told his teammates that he would be defined by what he does with the rest of his career, not what he did in 2011.

"He has his mindset in the right direction," O'Brien said.

But will anyone throw in Amerson's direction this season? He had four games in 2011 with at least two interceptions, with game-deciding touchdown returns against Virginia and Louisville. Senior safety Earl Wolff said Louisville tested Amerson only twice in the bowl game ... and both passes ended up his hands.

"Any time the ball comes his way, he can make a play," Wolff said.

Given the design of the Wolfpack's defense — Amerson lines up as the field corner, always to the wide side of the field — O'Brien says Amerson will get tested, just not as much as last year.

Amerson worked on his strength and footwork in the offseason, but maybe he needed to work on his patience. He is prepared to see fewer passes and, likely, come up with fewer interceptions.

Thirteen, he admits, is a lot and there was some luck involved. But there's one stat he'll be counting on this season.

"As long as we get the wins, I'll be fine," he said.

In NC State's case, the wins usually follow the highlight-reel interceptions.

— Joe Giglio

TOP CORNERBACKS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Tyrann Mathieu**	Jr.	LSU
	Plays bigger than he is, knows the right time to be aggressive.		
2.	**David Amerson**	Jr.	NC State
	Can't expect him to grab 13 INTs again, but he'll always affect the game.		
3.	**Johnny Adams**	Sr.	Michigan State
	All-Big Ten performer active and fast; three INTs and four sacks in 2011.		
4.	**Nigel Malone**	Sr.	Kansas State
	Had seven picks last season in his first year out of junior college.		
5.	**Johnthan Banks**	Sr.	Mississippi State
	Has 12 career INTs; best Bulldogs DB in about a decade.		
6.	**Nickell Robey**	Jr.	USC
	Small and quick (5-8, 165), he's All-Pac-12 vs. waves of tall, talented WRs.		
7.	**Micah Hyde**	Sr.	Iowa
	Versatile DB stepped up in spring, asked to be leader and play more man.		
8.	**Brodrick Brown**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	Makes up for lack of height (5-8) with athleticism and on-ball skills.		
9.	**E.J. Gaines**	Jr.	Missouri
	Defended 18 passes last season to set a single-season school mark.		
10.	**Merrill Noel**	So.	Wake Forest
	Was a fearless freshman who broke up a school-record 19 passes.		
11.	**Demontre Hurst**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	A veteran of 27 starts; had 55-yard INT return for TD vs. Texas in '11.		
12.	**Xavier Rhodes**	Jr.	Florida State
	Numbers a bit down last year, but he's a big, physical player with upside.		

TOP SAFETIES

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**T.J. McDonald**	Sr.	USC
	Another Trojan who stayed; like dad, Tim, he's an All-American.		
2.	**Eric Reid**	Jr.	LSU
	By our count, one of six LSU juniors who could be first-rounders in 2013.		
3.	**Robert Lester**	Sr.	Alabama
	After nearly leaving for NFL, came back to lead reloaded secondary.		
4.	**Bacarri Rambo**	Sr.	Georgia
	Downgraded a bit because he has to serve early season suspension.		
5.	**John Boyett**	Sr.	Oregon
	Brings a linebacker mentality to the position; made 108 stops last year.		
6.	**Tony Jefferson**	Jr.	Oklahoma
	Will be parked at FS this year after moving all over last season.		
7.	**Kenny Vaccaro**	Sr.	Texas
	Big hitter and game-changer, and yet another standout UT DB.		
8.	**Matt Elam**	Jr.	Florida
	SS gets into the backfield (11 TFLs) and is also fine in man coverage.		
9.	**Lamarcus Joyner**	Jr.	Florida State
	At 5-8, covers a lot of ground from SS spot; second-team All-ACC in 2011.		
10.	**Hakeem Smith**	Jr.	Louisville
	All-Big East safety already a veteran of 25 career starts.		
11.	**Earl Wolff**	Sr.	NC State
	Has forced seven fumbles and made 204 tackles in past two years.		
12.	**C.J. Barnett**	Jr.	Ohio State
	Led the Buckeyes with 75 tackles last season.		

PLAYER RATINGS

ALL PURPOSE

Oregon's 'Black Mamba' goes for the jugular

The Black Mamba is the fastest and one of the deadliest land snakes in the world.

Named for the black coloration of its mouth, the Black Mamba uses a variety of quick strikes while attacking its prey. Each bite delivers a lethal injection of deadly venom.

TOP KICKERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Caleb Sturgis**	Sr.	Florida
	Made 46 of 60 FGs for career with five coming from 50 yards or more.		
2.	**Dustin Hopkins**	Sr.	Florida State
	Man with the golden cleats was a Groza Award finalist last season.		
3.	**Quinn Sharp**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	Best foot in the nation: Has been FWAA All-American as PK and P.		
4.	**Brett Maher**	Sr.	Nebraska
	Was 19 of 23 on FG attempts last season; only one miss from inside 50.		
5.	**Drew Alleman**	Sr.	LSU
	Made 16 of 18 FGs last season; knows what it's like to kick in the clutch.		
6.	**Zach Hocker**	Jr.	Arkansas
	Better than 80 percent in career (37 of 46 FGs) and great kickoff man.		
7.	**Michael Hunnicutt**	So.	Oklahoma
	Stability in the Sooners' kicking game: 21 of 24 FGs, long of 53.		
8.	**Andre Heidari**	So.	USC
	When Barkley and Co. aren't scoring TDs, he hits: 15 of 17, long of 50.		

TOP PUNTERS

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**Brad Wing**	So.	LSU
	2011 All-American kept Bama pinned all day in regular-season game.		
2.	**Ryan Allen**	Sr.	Louisiana Tech
	Won the Ray Guy Award (46.1-yard average, 22 inside the 20).		
3.	**Quinn Sharp**	Sr.	Oklahoma State
	Has posted a 45.8-yard average across three seasons.		
4.	**Jackson Rice**	Sr.	Oregon
	Ducks didn't punt enough for Rice to qualify nationally with 45.9-yard average.		
5.	**Tress Way**	Sr.	Oklahoma
	2011: Placed 34 of 63 punts inside the 20 with only six touchbacks.		
6.	**Brian Schmiedebusch**	Jr.	Bowling Green
	Ranked sixth nationally in punting; BG was fifth in net punting.		
7.	**Ian Campbell**	Sr.	UTEP
	Has two-year average of 45.6 yards after transferring from JC.		
8.	**Dylan Breeding**	Sr.	Arkansas
	Yet another reason (45.3-yard average) why Hogs put foes on their heels.		

TOP ALL PURPOSE

RK	NAME	CLASS	COLLEGE
1.	**De'Anthony Thomas**	So.	Oregon
	With the right amount of touches, a Heisman isn't out of the question.		
2.	**Justin Gilbert**	Jr.	Oklahoma State
	An excellent CB; on kick returns, it's one move, track speed, TD.		
3.	**Andre Debose**	Jr.	Florida
	Big-play WR has three kick-returns for touchdowns in 40 attempts.		
4.	**Jamal Miles**	Sr.	Arizona State
	Three return TDs in 2011; a threat on laterals and quick passes.		
5.	**Greg Reid**	Sr.	Florida State
	One of top corners in the ACC and has three career punt return TDs.		
6.	**Dennis Johnson**	Sr.	Arkansas
	Helped fill in for RB Knile Davis; was second in SEC in all-purpose yards.		
7.	**Dustin Harris**	Sr.	Texas A&M
	Led nation in punt returns and is part of rotation at cornerback.		
8.	**Tyler Lockett**	So.	Kansas State
	WR had two kick return TDs; is son of former K-State star Kevin Lockett.		

Photo by Kirby Lee-US PRESSWIRE

De'ANTHONY THOMAS

Oregon sophomore De'Anthony Thomas is sort of the football equivalent. He's devastating to defenses in versatility and impact to the point that the 5-9, 173-pound running back/wide receiver/kick returner has carried the moniker "Black Mamba" since elementary school.

"It's been following me throughout my whole career," Thomas said. "I got it from my game on the field being compared to a snake."

As a freshman in 2011, Thomas slithered, darted and struck his way to 18 touchdowns while taking the term "versatility" to extremes.

Many running backs catch passes out of the backfield. Wide receivers get the occasional carry. Each position produces fine kick returners. But few college football players have ever been so effective from all three positions.

Thomas was the only player in the country last year to surpass 400 yards in rushing, receiving, and kickoff return yardage. And while the Ducks had a Heisman Trophy candidate at running back in LaMichael James, Thomas still ranked 11th nationally in all-purpose yards (159.6 per game).

Now, Thomas is better versed in the Ducks' no-huddle, spread-option offense and is in the process of adding bulk to his slight frame.

"I think his role will expand for us, and it's exciting because he's such a talented kid," Oregon coach Chip Kelly said. "You still kind of catch yourself going, 'Wow!'"

Many have expressed a similar reaction while watching Thomas perform since he first touched a football.

Thomas received the nickname "Black Mamba" at age 11 while playing football for rapper Snoop Dogg's "Snoop Youth Football League" in Los Angeles. While at Crenshaw High School, he ran the 100 meters in 10.57 seconds. He is typically the fastest player on the field ... so, he has only the end zone on his mind.

"I expect to score, but you never know how fast a guy is, so you always want to go as fast as you can no matter what," Thomas said.

Thomas originally committed to USC as a senior before changing his mind weeks before Signing Day, 2011. Essentially, Thomas turned down the chance to be the next Reggie Bush at USC to become the first De'Anthony Thomas at Oregon.

Playing behind running backs LaMichael James and Kenjon Barner allowed Thomas to learn, while Kelly and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich schemed ways to take advantage of his skills.

Kelly held one-on-one meetings with Thomas during the season to accelerate the learning process.

The strategy produced mind-blowing numbers for a freshman:

- Rushing: 55 carries for 595 yards (10.8 average), seven touchdowns.
- Receiving: 46 receptions, 605 yards (13.2 average), nine touchdowns.
- Kickoff returns: 36 for 983 yards (27.3 average), two touchdowns.
- Punt returns: 3 for 52 yards (17.3 average).

That's 140 touches for 2,235 yards (a 16-yard average), with his 18 touchdowns.

So what's next for Thomas? Try more touches for potentially more yards and more touchdowns. He will back up Barner this season at running back, but he'll play plenty at receiver, and of course return kicks.

"He's got the whole package both at wide receiver and running back," Kelly said. Whether or not Thomas' body could handle a larger workload out of the backfield remains a concern, although he said he plans to add five to seven pounds of muscle by the fall while maintaining his speed. Oregon running backs coach Gary Campbell said it's difficult to gauge Thomas' ability to handle punishment at the collegiate level because defenders have rarely gotten a clean hit on him.

Getting to Thomas is easier said than done. Just ask Oregon cornerback Terrance Mitchell.

"He's a quick dude. ... He's like a cat," Mitchell said. "So you have to be like a cat just like him."

Maybe, but a cat is no match for a Black Mamba.

— Aaron Fentress

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP10 BACKFIELDS

1. ARKANSAS

Here's how this works: We could rank the best quarterback groups in the country, and we could separately rate the running back units, but we like to mash them together and mix it up. It's more fun to look at who has the best quarterbacks *and* running backs ... so any one-hit wonders in either department need not apply.

The backfield has to be the complete package.

Which brings us to Arkansas.

The double-shot of quarterback Tyler Wilson and running back Knile Davis — both third nationally in our player position rankings — gives the Razorbacks two realistic All-Americans and two first-round draft picks for next season.

Wilson fired for 3,638 yards last season and is still coached by a Petrino (offensive coordinator Paul, not head coach Bobby), while interim coach John L. Smith will serve as caretaker of the offense and let Wilson flourish.

While Davis was sitting last season with an ankle injury, Dennis Johnson and Ronnie Wingo filled in nicely, and both are back. But the Hogs are eager to see the return of Davis, who ran for 1,322 yards in 2010 and can be a difference-maker in the SEC.

2. MICHIGAN

Quarterback Denard Robinson leaves plenty to be desired as a passer, but he's as slippery as any running back in the country and just as able to completely take over a game with his feet. The senior has 3,229 career rushing yards and 35 touchdowns on the ground, which makes backfield mate Fitzgerald Toussaint jealous. He didn't earn the featured role until a month or so into last season, but then he finished with 678 yards in the final five regular-season games. And the Wolverines have high hopes for sophomore power back Thomas Rawls, all while scheming cool ways to get Robinson and backup Devin Gardner on the field at the same time.

3. USC

The Trojans' best option is to have the nation's best quarterback throw to the nation's best pair of receivers, but there is nothing wrong with Matt Barkley handing off to senior Curtis McNeal, who emerged around the middle of last season to finish with 1,005 yards. What's iffy is the depth, with no experience behind Barkley and uncommonly little behind McNeal, especially after a spring knee injury to Tre Madden.

4. GEORGIA

The Dawgs' Aaron Murray has had back-to-back 3,000-yard passing seasons and led Georgia to the SEC title game last year. Isaiah Crowell wasn't disappointing as a touted freshman last season — other than the two disciplinary suspensions — as he ran for 850 yards. Needing depth, the Bulldogs added early enrollee freshman Keith Marshall, a national top 50 recruit whose quickness and instincts impressed coach Mark Richt in the spring.

Tyler Wilson

Photo by RD Moore

5. KANSAS STATE

Senior quarterback Collin Klein is built like a linebacker and runs like a tailback. Last season, he tied Ricky Williams' Big 12 record with 27 rushing touchdowns, while setting school QB records for rushing yards (1,141), carries (317) and points (162). Klein also passed for 1,918 yards. Junior running back John Hubert rushed for 970 yards. And the system works because of effective blocking from senior fullback Braden Wilson.

6. TCU

The Horned Frogs are the only team in the nation that had three running backs over 700 yards in 2011: junior Waymon James (875, six touchdowns), senior Ed Wesley (726, six TDs) and senior Matthew Tucker (702, 12 TDs). Wesley ran for 1,078 yards in 2010. Junior Casey Pachall, who broke Andy Dalton's records for completions, yards and completion percentage, rallied his team from behind four times in 2011.

7. CLEMSON

The Tigers have another year of experience in the up-tempo offense and the returning personnel to burn rubber in the opener against Auburn (some reconstruction along the offensive line, notwithstanding). Quarterback Tajh Boyd passed for 3,828 yards last season, and running back Andre Ellington (1,178 yards, 11 touchdowns) returned after considering the NFL.

8. OKLAHOMA

Senior Landry Jones is the Sooners' leader in every career passing category and is about to become the school's career leader in victories. Hard-pounding senior Dominique Whaley (105 yards per game and nine TDs before a broken ankle) and junior scatback Roy Finch (605 rushing yards and 34 catches) are a nice 1-2 punch. Sophomore quarterback Blake Bell, Jones' backup, rushed for 13 TDs, and junior fullback Trey Millard plays all over the field. Expect major contributions from running back transfer Damien Williams, who led junior college last season with 1,931 yards and 30 touchdowns.

9. NEBRASKA

Gritty Rex Burkhead has a nose for the goal line (17 total touchdowns last year) and twice had at least 35 carries in a game. Junior quarterback Taylor Martinez will continue to frustrate defenses with his ability to slash-and-dash in the ground attack. The question is whether or not he'll continue to frustrate those in scarlet and cream with his inaccuracy.

10. ALABAMA

This final spot could have gone to North Carolina, maybe Oregon, even Fresno State — hello, Wisconsin! — but the tie goes to the national champions. Cool customer AJ McCarron is easy to appreciate at quarterback, and Tide fans will cling to him ever more tightly after the late-April transfer of backup Phillip Sims. New faces in the backfield — Eddie Lacy, Jalston Fowler, Dee Hart and early enrollee freshman T.J. Yeldon — have varying styles and fresh legs.

TOP10 RECEIVERS

1. USC

Robert Woods and Marqise Lee aren't just the best pair of receivers in the country this season, they could be the best pair of receivers in just about any season.

Here are just the raw numbers from last year: 184 catches for 2,435 yards and 26 touchdowns. And that was when Woods was a sophomore and Lee a true freshman. They just might be better now. Woods lines up everywhere in different formations, as USC is always probing the matchups. But not even Woods is as dangerous after the catch as Lee.

Who is behind these guys? Does it matter? Yes, transfers have thinned the backup spots, with one of the beneficiaries being sophomore George Farmer — giving USC a first-team trio of receivers who were all teammates at Gardena (Calif.) Serra High School.

2. CLEMSON

Sophomore Sammy Watkins was, like USC's Lee, a freshman sensation last season, overshadowing Tigers' junior DeAndre Hopkins. Hopkins got the message, giving up playing hoops for Clemson last winter and having a fabulous spring practice, able to add strength and weight and better battle for balls. Watkins won't get worse after catching 82 passes for 1,219 yards and 12 touchdowns, and look for Hopkins to improve on his 72-catch season.

OFFENSE

3. WEST VIRGINIA

Senior Tavon Austin led the nation with 2,574 all-purpose yards (198 per game), including a school-record 101 catches for 1,186 yards and eight touchdowns in the Big East. Junior Stedman Bailey is a top deep threat, averaging 17.8 yards per catch with seven 100-yard games in 2011 (school record 1,279 yards and 12 TDs). Junior Ivan McCartney chipped in 49 catches for 585 yards and three scores.

4. TENNESSEE

The Vols get better in a hurry with the return of rangy 6-4 Justin Hunter, known as "Gumby" for his ability to contort and stretch for any pass within his significant leaping ability and wingspan. Hunter, who missed most of last season because of a knee injury, rejoins Da'Rick Rogers (67 catches, 1,040 yards, nine touchdowns), while both welcome talented newcomers, including JC star Cordarrelle Patterson.

5. OKLAHOMA

Junior Kenny Stills (61 catches in each of his first two years) and Jaz Reynolds (715 yards, 17.4 per catch last year) are returning starters, though both had the drops last season. However, the Sooners' best two receivers might be newcomers: junior college transfer Courtney Gardner and freshman Trey Metoyer, who was the top high school wideout in the nation in 2010. He played at prep school in 2011 and was the Sooners' best wideout in the spring.

6. WASHINGTON STATE

This is probably the deepest spot for the Cougars, which is the right way to be when head coach Mike Leach walks through that door. These receivers will post numbers, none moreso than junior star Marquess Wilson, who could become Leach's Michael Crabtree of the Northwest, although the coach was on Wilson's case this spring for a lack of effort. There was nothing wrong with Wilson's effort last season: 82 catches for 1,388 yards and 12 touchdowns.

7. ARKANSAS

A pipeline to the NFL hasn't depleted Tyler Wilson's targets. Wideout Cobi Hamilton and tight end Chris Gragg moved up the receiving hierarchy this spring, ready to cash their tickets. Sophomore Marquel Wade previewed his shifty skills in the return game last season and now will be a playmaker in the passing game.

8. FLORIDA STATE

Explosive sophomore Rashad Greene, who had 597 receiving yards and seven touchdowns last year, is a star in the making. He averaged 15.7 yards per catch. Five of the Seminoles' top six receivers return for quarterback EJ Manuel.

9. GEORGIA

Coach Mark Richt dared in the spring to move dynamic wideout Malcolm Mitchell to defense in order to shore up depth at cornerback. Turns out, the 6-1 sophomore has skills there, too. Maybe the coaches will play tug-of-war with Mitchell, maybe they share him, but Richt won't want to be without his best deep threat for too long. Senior Tavarres King keeps coming on, making 47 catches for 705 yards last season.

10. TEXAS TECH

The Red Raiders retain their top three pass-catchers from last season, led by Eric Ward, who picked up some second-team All-Big 12 honors last season after catching 84 passes for 800 yards and 11 touchdowns.

TOP10 OFFENSIVE LINES

1. ALABAMA

At the end of spring ball, Alabama had NFL-DraftScout's top-rated senior center (Barrett Jones), its third-rated senior guard (Chance Warmack), its third-rated junior tackle (D.J. Fluker) and its No. 1 sophomore tackle (Cyrus Kouandjio). Not much of that is a stretch, with Kouandjio muscling into the starting lineup and moving Jones to his third position in three years.

2. LSU

The Tigers have four returning starters, with the nation's best pair of tackles — Alex Hurst and Chris Faulk. Senior guard Josh Dworaczyk, who has started 26 games, is back after missing last season because of a knee injury. LSU isn't waiting on him. The depth is such that sophomore La'el Collins came out of spring with the starting job. For now.

3. OKLAHOMA

The Sooners have four returning starters (junior left guard Gabe Ikard, senior center Ben Habern, senior right guard Tyler Evans, senior right tackle-to-left tackle Lane Johnson) and a fifth (sophomore right guard Adam Shead) who started half the season. This group helped OU average 4.5 yards per carry and allowed only 11 sacks last season.

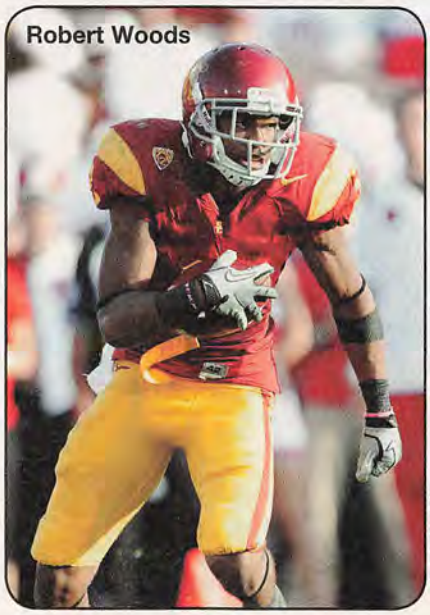
Robert Woods

Photo by John Pyle

4. TEXAS A&M

The Aggies might not be ready to hang with new SEC West pal LSU right away, but they don't have to concede much on the offensive line, especially at tackle. Luke Joeckel and Jake Matthews are junior three-year starters, having already graduated from what *Lindy's* described last season as "beasts in the making" to full-on monsters.

5. WISCONSIN

Despite routinely losing personnel to the NFL, the Badgers rarely get caught short-handed on the line. Ricky Wagner will keep the quarterback's blindside free from trouble, while Travis Frederick can dominate at guard or center. File this name away for the future: Dan Voltz, who impressed after enrolling in January as a freshman.

6. WEST VIRGINIA

Four full-time starters return, including senior center Joe Madsen, who has made 38 career starts and is one of the best in the country at his position. Left guard Josh Jenkins, who redshirted last season because of a knee injury, has 24 career starts.

7. NORTH CAROLINA

The Tar Heels bring back four starters, who still might be catching their breath from the fast-paced spring practices of new coach Larry Fedora. With left tackle James Hurst and left guard Jonathan Cooper having All-ACC talent, the smart money is on North Carolina getting in shape and being able to plow foes in the fourth quarter.

8. MICHIGAN STATE

The heart of the Spartans' offensive attack will be a thick front line led by guard Chris McDonald and tackle Fou Fonoti. Having one of the conference's most experienced lines will help ease the loss of all-conference pick Joel Foreman.

9. OKLAHOMA STATE

Three starters are gone to the NFL, but senior guard Lane Taylor (36 career starts) is a plow horse and senior guard Jonathan Rush (16 career starts) is back after a knee injury. Senior tackle Michael Bowie and Parker Graham each have five career starts. Even new center Evan Epstein is a senior.

10. TENNESSEE

This could be a reach. The Vols were a woeful running team last season, reflecting poorly on the line. This also could be a savvy projection, with five returning starters — not untalented, mind you — looking to make amends. If this pick doesn't work out, send your criticisms to Derek Dooley before UT pulls the plug on his university e-mail.

UNIT RANKINGS

TOP10 DEFENSIVE LINES

1. LSU

We'd like this group even better if it still had NFL early entry defensive tackle Michael Brockers, a first-round pick, but we're also pretty sure we can't rate the Tigers any higher than No. 1.

LSU had such depth last season — and still has so much of it — that end Barkevious Mingo started only four games ... and still had 15 tackles for loss, eight sacks and 11 quarterback hurries. Returning starting end Sam Montgomery had 13.5 tackles for loss, with nine sacks. Bennie Logan (57 tackles) is back at a tackle spot.

Our pals at NFLDraftScout.com projected in the spring that each of these juniors would be top 25 picks in the 2013 Draft. By that time, they should be wearing national championship rings.

2. FLORIDA STATE

FSU's defensive line is starting to look like many of the ones of yesteryear — the ones with Corey Simon, Derrick Alexander and Andre Wadsworth ... those kind of guys.

FSU didn't allow any of its final eight opponents last season to score more than 19 points, and let's credit a line that returns three starters. The Seminoles jumped to fourth last season in total defense — better than anybody outside of the SEC — and ranked second in rushing defense.

Senior end Brandon Jenkins, somehow not in the NFL yet after making 36.5 career tackles for loss, saw a dip in his stats last season, if only because of all the extra blocking attention. Junior end Bjoern Werner and senior defensive tackle Everett Dawkins will keep taking advantage.

3. SOUTH CAROLINA

The Gamecocks will put their defensive ends — 6-6 sophomore Jadeveon Clowney and 6-8 Devin Taylor — up against those in Baton Rouge and Tallahassee. Clowney, the nation's top recruit in 2011, had eight sacks and five forced fumbles last season while just running around and being an excitable freshman. He's smarter and stronger as a sophomore, when the coaches will also slide him inside, looking for mismatches. Senior Devin Taylor is an All-SEC-caliber pass rusher at the other end, while sophomore tackle Kelcy Quarles is coming off a Freshman All-American season.

4. GEORGIA

Nobody has nose guards like the Bulldogs, who have a talented pair of 350-pounders — give or take breakfast — in John Jenkins and Kwame Geathers. Coordinator Todd Grantham tinkered in the spring, using them in the same alignment, and not just at the goal line, an idea that has a chance to work because of Jenkins' athleticism. Let's just call this the biggest three-man front in America, including 309-pound end Abry Jones and 269-pound end Cornelius Washington, a speedy former outside linebacker.

5. TCU

Junior end Stansly Maponga is in the recent mold of TCU's undersized but super-quick pass rushers. He had nine sacks, 13.5 tackles for loss and five forced fumbles last season. Senior end Ross Forrest, a former walk-on, had six tackles for loss; sophomore defensive tackle David Johnson, a Freshman All-American in '11, had seven.

6. TEXAS

Senior Alex Okafor, a first-team All-American in 2011, needs to be in the discussion as the nation's best defensive end. On the other end, junior Jackson Jeffcoat was second-team All-Big 12. That duo combined for 15 sacks and 35 tackles for loss. At tackle, junior college transfer Brandon Moore could help immediately.

7. MICHIGAN STATE

No Jerel Worthy, no problem. William Gholston is one of the nation's best athletes on the edge, and fellow end Marcus Rush (yes, that's the last name we want for our defensive ends) drew national recognition for his freshman campaign. Their ability to get into the backfield (a combined 28 tackles for loss last season) will lessen the load on the interior line, where Anthony Rashad White had an impressive spring.

Tyrann Mathieu

Photo by Derick E. Hingle-US PRESSWIRE

8. OHIO STATE

All four starters return to a line that is looking to improve upon OSU's No. 50 national ranking in rushing defense. John Simon is one of the Big Ten's best and most reliable linemen; his 6-4, 317-pound teammate Johnathan Hankins might possess the most potential at the next level. They combined for 27 tackles for loss last season.

9. FLORIDA

Defensive end Ronald Powell's spring ACL tear was a blow, figuring to keep him out until at least October. Coach Will Muschamp still has dominant pieces to deploy in end Sharrif Floyd, who could move inside to tackle, and tackle Dominique Easley, who could slide outside to end. Such interesting options to have with guys who weigh around 300 pounds.

10. VIRGINIA TECH

The line returns intact for what has a chance to rank with the Hokies' finest defenses. Defensive end James Gayle leads the unit and should push for ACC Defensive Player of the Year honors.

TOP10 LINEBACKERS

1. GEORGIA

Jarvis Jones, who began his career at Southern California, was an All-American in his first season at Georgia last year, fitting in perfectly into the Bulldogs' 3-4 scheme. He's the NFL prototype for an outside linebacker — one of those get-into-the-backfield guys who go high in the first round. Jones had 13.5 sacks and 19.5 tackles for loss last season.

All of his linebacker pals are back, including Alec Ogletree, a former safety whose speed is a wonderful asset on the inside, especially when he's free to roam because those 350-pound nose guards keep blockers off of him.

2. IOWA STATE

Arguably the two best linebackers in the Big 12 — and one of the most productive tandems in the nation — play in Ames. Senior A.J. Klein (116 tackles, 7.5 for loss) was the Big 12's Co-Defensive Player of the Year in 2011, and senior Jake Knott (115 tackles, four forced fumbles) was also a first-team All-Big 12 pick.

3. ALABAMA

Dont'a Hightower is gone, taken in the first round of the NFL Draft, and Courtney Upshaw went high in the second round. Coach Nick Saban will just blow his whistle, start the assembly line and crank out more for 2013. It's called "NFL ready" ... and the Tide will

have two more in senior Nico Johnson and junior C.J. Mosley, while Saban carves out space in the rotation for all his former five-star recruits.

4. STANFORD

Stanford has four starters back in its 3-4 scheme, plus Shayne Skov, who is making his way back from a knee injury suffered early last season. The Cardinal was third nationally against the run last season — so these linebackers are active and tough — and outside linebacker Chase Thomas led the league with 17.5 tackles for loss. Trent Murphy had 10 TFLs on the other side.

5. WISCONSIN

Bucky brings back two of the Big Ten's top five tacklers — Mike Taylor (10.7 per game) and Chris Borland (10.2). Both earned first-team nods and are experienced enough to help the team bring along a new face to start opposite Taylor on the outside.

6. OREGON

Michael Clay is coming off a 102-tackle season from the weak side, with returning starter Boseko Lokombo doing more of the dirty work on the strong side. Middle linebacker Kiko Alonso has a chance to be dominating — that's defensive coordinator Nick Aliotti's word — and will be looking to build off his Rose Bowl performance, when he was Defensive Player of the Game.

7. PENN STATE

Linebacker U remains. First-team All-Big 12 performer Gerald Hodges is among the best in the nation, while Michael Mauti is inching his way toward 100 percent after rehabbing a torn left ACL (at least now he has a matching set of surgically repaired knees).

8. MICHIGAN STATE

Chris Norman has made 23 starts and is a veteran complement to fellow outside 'backer Denicos Allen, whose 11 sacks last season are the most among returning Big Ten defenders. Max Bullough controls the middle of the field as well as any Big Ten linebacker.

9. FLORIDA

The Gators can always count on Jonathan Bostic, a heady middle linebacker who led the team with 94 tackles last season — 10 for loss. The man with big-time NFL upside is Jelani Jenkins, but he first needs to translate that athleticism into more game-changing plays for Florida.

10. USC

It's an all-sophomore starting crew, with Pac-12 Defensive Freshman of the Year Dion Bailey on one side and Hayes Pullard on the other — they shared the team lead in tackles. Middle linebacker Lamar Dawson, who supplanted now-departed veteran Chris Galippo halfway through last season, further settled into a comfort zone and leadership role in the spring.

Jarvis Jones

Photo by Joe Robbins

TOP10 DEFENSIVE BACKS

1. LSU

You can't not love the Honey Badger. In two years, Tyrann Mathieu has 15 tackles for loss, including six sacks, 14 pass break-ups, four interceptions, 11 forced fumbles, eight recoveries and two punt return touchdowns. That's a busy, busy Badger. And he might not be the Tiger's best pure cover man, even after Morris Claiborne left early for the NFL.

While Mathieu is 5-9, Tharold Simon is 6-3, and he broke up 10 passes last season in a rotational role. "He looked like he was 6-7 because he's all arms and legs," an opposing SEC coach told *Lindy's*. "He looked like a damn spider."

Throw in All-America candidate Eric Reid at free safety ... and the Tigers could have the nation's top defensive back for the third year in a row, following Patrick Peterson and Claiborne. Take your pick.

2. NC STATE

The Wolfpack has been a big-play outfit in the past couple of seasons, leading the nation last year with 27 interceptions — an amazing 13 coming from cornerback David Amerson. He and rest of the starting secondary return for more in 2012, having combined for 114 career starts.

3. USC

Free safety T.J. McDonald pulled a Barkley by staying for his senior season. Consider McDonald the quarterback of the defense, and a terrific spring portends an All-America season. Nickell Robey, a feisty 5-8, is one of the top cornerbacks in the Pac-12 and helps make this one of the deepest units in an otherwise thin lineup.

4. TEXAS

Junior Carrington Byndom was first-team All-Big 12 last season, and teams with impressive sophomore Quandre Diggs as a pair of formidable corners. Senior SS Kenny Vaccaro, another first-team All-Big 12 performer, has a relentless flair that gives a needed edge to the Longhorns' defense.

5. GEORGIA

The Bulldogs, who swiped an SEC-best 20 passes last season, will have to get by early in the season without returning All-America safety Bacarri Rambo, who was suspended. Other defensive backs also will have to sit out for a bit, but the Dawgs will be at full strength for the bulk of their schedule.

6. ALABAMA

The Tide will use movable parts — deep and talented movable parts — around safety Robert Lester, whose return for his senior season provides a high baseline for confidence. Look for cornerback Dee Milliner and safety Vinnie Sunseri to excel in expanded roles.

7. OKLAHOMA

Junior Tony Jefferson, one of the Big 12's best tacklers, takes his 21 career starts to free safety. Senior safety Javon Harris, victimized deep throughout 2011, moves down low. Senior Demontre Hurst is one of the Big 12's best cover men and a fierce hitter, while junior Aaron Colvin, who has played all over the secondary, is maybe the Sooners' top defensive playmaker.

8. FLORIDA STATE

The Seminoles intercepted 16 passes and ranked 25th nationally in passing efficiency defense last year. Cornerbacks Xavier Rhodes and Greg Reid, and safety Lamarcus Joyner — all veterans, are honors candidates so expect similarly good results for FSU.

9. OKLAHOMA STATE

The cornerbacks are playmakers. Senior Brodrick Brown was first-team All-Big 12 in 2011, and junior Justin Gilbert was second-team. Junior free safety Daytawion Lowe led the Cowboys with 97 tackles and three forced fumbles.

10. MICHIGAN STATE

Yet another defensive strength for Michigan State. Johnny Adams is an All-America candidate, and Darqueze Dennard isn't shabby at the opposite corner. Safety Isaiah Lewis returned two of his team-leading four interceptions last year for touchdowns.

Illustration by Tim Williams

USC vs. MICHIGAN
For the good of the game?

BY ANTHONY GIMINO AND DENNIS DODD

THE SEC IS JUST TOO DOMINANT FOR THE REST OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL

What this college football season needs is a bolt of lightning. Or two. Actually, it might take a whole bucket full.

Because the way the SEC has had its way with the rest of college football lately, it's getting monotonous.

For everyone outside the SEC, the end of the college football season has turned into a horror story. Fans in the Midwest, Pacific Coast, Southwest and Northeast have been left shivering around a campfire listening to Nick Saban, with a flashlight under his chin, telling spooky tales of 300-pound defensive tackles who run like linebackers and suck the souls of opposing quarterbacks.

The SEC dominance, while profound, is getting old. It's time for the rest of college football to start shining its light.

The whole of college football needs the best conference in college football to punch each other out. This year, we need a bunch of two-loss SEC teams.

That the SEC has won six consecutive national titles is just great for the SEC, especially the state of Alabama. Good for the league. Well played. God bless.

Face it: That two SEC teams — LSU and Alabama — held a rematch in last year's national championship game wasn't so wonderful for the big picture. It resulted in the third-lowest TV ratings in the 14 years of the BCS and was a relative yawner of a game, a defensive slog.

Instead, picture a season in which Alabama beats LSU, Arkansas beats Alabama, Florida beats Georgia, South Carolina beats Florida ... you get the idea. The in-conference wreckage would be just enough that two teams from other conferences could stroll to Miami for the BCS Championship Game without having to fear LSU or Alabama or any of those other unbeatable SEC teams.

You know, something like USC vs. Michigan.

Those traditions. Those fan bases. Those quarterbacks. Those helmets. Those comeback stories — Michigan from its internal demons

of the Rich Rodriguez "era;" USC from its messy post-Pete Carroll transition.

Michigan, the winningest program in college football history, has never played in one of these BCS title games. The Trojans won one (just ask them), but the record book doesn't show it because it was vacated due to sanctions. Now, they are re-emerging from two years in lockup, as LA-sexy as ever.

Sorry, SEC. That matchup sounds like a double-shot of adrenaline compared to more yawn-twins from the land of smashmouth.

We get it. The SEC is the best. It will, indisputably, collectively, be the very best conference again this year. Bigger *and* better. But we can dream of some new blood, can't we?

At least we can until the first week of the season when, in Dallas, in Jerry Jones' man-cave, Michigan opens against ... Alabama.

CONFERENCE REALIGNMENT

Seven of the 11 conferences have a different look this season, including the addition of four programs to the Football Bowl Subdivision.

College football is about at halftime of the whole realignment movement.

Last season saw the expansion of the Pac-10 and Big Ten (as well as shuffling in the Mountain West and WAC). And we're still waiting for the final shoes to drop on ACC expansion (Pitt, Syracuse) and the ensuing waves of change that will lead to a geographically incongruent Big East (Boise State, San Diego State, Houston, SMU, etc.) and new looks for Conference USA and the Mountain West.

But, hey, one year at a time. For this year, here is how realignment affects your conference standings for 2012:

SEC (14 teams, 2 divisions)
In: Missouri (East), Texas A&M (West)

Big 12 (10 teams, no divisions)
In: TCU, West Virginia
Out: Missouri, Texas A&M

Big East (8 teams)
In: Temple **Out:** West Virginia

MAC (13 teams, 2 divisions)
In: UMass (East) **Out:** Temple

MWC (10 teams)
In: Fresno State, Hawaii, Nevada **Out:** TCU

Sun Belt (10 teams)
In: South Alabama

WAC (7 teams, no divisions)
In: Texas-San Antonio, Texas State
Out: Fresno State, Hawaii, Nevada

BCS MATCHUPS

The BCS National Championship Game heads to Miami. Here's how *Lindy's* sees the biggest games shaking out this season:

ROSE BOWL
TUESDAY, JAN. 1
PASADENA, CALIF. * ROSE BOWL
BIG TEN #1 VS. PAC-12 #1
LINDY'S PICK: MICHIGAN VS. OREGON

ORANGE BOWL
TUESDAY, JAN. 1
MIAMI * SUN LIFE STADIUM
ACC #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: FLORIDA STATE VS. LOUISVILLE

SUGAR BOWL
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 2
NEW ORLEANS, LA. * LOUISIANA SUPERDOME
SEC #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: ALABAMA VS. WEST VIRGINIA

FIESTA BOWL
THURSDAY, JAN. 3
GLENDALE, ARIZ. * UNIV. OF PHOENIX STADIUM
BIG 12 #1 VS. BCS AT-LARGE
LINDY'S PICK: OKLAHOMA VS. MICHIGAN STATE

BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME
MONDAY, JAN. 7
MIAMI * SUN LIFE STADIUM
BCS #1 VS. BCS #2
LINDY'S PICK: LSU VS. USC

HEISMAN WATCH

There is always a certain logic to handicapping the Heisman race in the preseason. Quarterback; Top 10 team; name recognition — they're the holy trinity of Heisman indicators.

Funny how the past three years have made pretzels out of our logic.

- Alabama running back Mark Ingram? Oh, he was a nice time-share running back ...
- Cam Newton? Merely a junior college transfer taking over an Auburn team that had lost five of its last eight games in 2009.
- Robert Griffin III? A Heisman winner at Baylor? Hahahahaha ...

In the age of constant highlights, we can't really be sure of anything anymore in the Heisman race, although we'll stick with as much logic as we can muster for now. Here are 10 players who, out of the gate, have the best shot:

1. Matt Barkley, QB, USC — All he has to do is match his numbers from last season (3,528 yards, 39 touchdowns) and get the Trojans to the BCS national title game (oh, is that all?) ... and the stiff-armed trophy is his.

2. Denard Robinson, QB, Michigan — Four of the past six Heisman winners have been dual-threat quarterbacks (Troy Smith, Tim Tebow, Newton, RG III). Robinson fits the bill, even as Michigan tries to squeeze more passing out of its attack. (Let him run, Brady!)

3. Montee Ball, RB, Wisconsin — Only one running back has won the Heisman this millennium (Ingram in 2009, when he benefitted from a championship team and a modest cast of competitors). For Ball to win, he just might have to get past 2,000 yards ... which he came within one long run of doing last season when he hit 1,923.

4. Geno Smith, QB, West Virginia — He's playing in a Dana Holgorsen-designed offense, so his numbers will rate with anybody in the nation. But he's not just a product of the system.

5. Landry Jones, QB, Oklahoma — Had one of the least memorable seasons for someone who passed for nearly 4,500 yards and 29 touchdowns. It's just that Jones' sophomore year was statistically superior, and the Sooners didn't live up to 2011's preseason No. 1 billing. Perhaps this is the year.

6. Tyrann Mathieu, DB/RET, LSU — The combination of "Badger Plays," his return game and a team poised to be on the biggest stage give Mathieu more Heisman hope than just your regular star defender. Besides, he got to New York last year, so his name recognition is huge.

7. De'Anthony Thomas, RB/WR, Oregon — Chip Kelly is no dummy. Whether he deploys Thomas more as a running back or receiver (plus returner), the sophomore is going to get all the touches he can handle, which means he will provide as many thrills as anyone in the country.

8. Marcus Lattimore, RB, South Carolina — This all spins on the health of his knee coming back from ACL surgery and if he can hold up for 12 punishing regular-season games. If so, his ceiling is as high as any.

9. Aaron Murray, QB, Georgia — The SEC's best quarterback, and the Bulldogs have a sneaky-good feel about them this season. (Hey, that's what we wrote about Murray last year, too!)

10. Tyler Wilson, QB, Arkansas — No, wait. Wilson is the best quarterback in the SEC! We'll see how it all plays out, but his QB rival at Georgia has a better shot at winning his division, which counts for something. SEC quarterbacks have won two of the past five Heismans.

FEBRUARY CHAMPIONS

Rivals.com assigns a point total to each of the school's recruiting classes every year, but a team can't be great based on just one recruiting class. Who's done it the best for five years? Let's add up all those points and see the answer.

OK, big shock: Alabama's Nick Saban. He has two national titles to show for it, and it would be no surprise if more are on the way. But celebrating on Signing Day is only part of the winning equation.

Be careful what you brag about. Nine of the top 15 teams in this recruiting snapshot have had at least one losing season in the past five years (and another, USC, is coming off a two-year postseason ban).

Here are the best recruiting teams of the past five years:

TEAM	POINTS
1. Alabama	13,183
2. USC	12,080
3. Florida	11,827
4. Texas	11,825
5. Florida State	10,986
6. LSU	10,761
7. Ohio State	10,602
8. Oklahoma	10,124
9. Georgia	10,039
10. Auburn	9,564
11. Michigan	9,269
12. Miami	8,612
13. Clemson	8,536
14. UCLA	8,148
15. Tennessee	8,144

(**Editor's note:** *Don't ask what the points mean ... it's too complicated!*)

RULE CHANGES FOR 2012

The change that most affects the game comes on kickoffs, in an effort to decrease what is considered the most dangerous play in football.

The NCAA moved up the spot where toe meets leather from the 30- to the 35-yard line, making it easier for kickers to reach the end zone, thereby increasing touchbacks and reducing the high-speed, injury-causing collisions.

At the same time, returners are encouraged to take a knee in the end zone, since offenses will now begin possession on the

25 instead of the 20.

While some coaches will be content to take the touchback, others might strategize. A high kick near the goal line might often result in a tackle inside the 25. Is it worth the risk? We'll see how coaches play this.

Elsewhere, there is new regulation for blocking below the waist and a banning of leaping over the punt protection shield. One new rule that will be noticed is that a player must miss a snap if he loses his helmet during a play.

STOP THE RUN!

We're not here to tell you that stopping the run is the most important ingredient in having a championship team, because you know that. (Turnover margin is a close second.) But here are some numbers that back it up.

- Two of the past 10 national champs have led the nation in rushing defense.
- Half of the title teams in the past 10 years ranked in the national top three against the run.
- Only one champion — 2005 Texas — ranked worse than 15th nationally against the run, and that Longhorns team had Vince Young to score as many as needed.

National Champions:Rushing Defense

Year	Champion	Rank	YPG
2011	Alabama	1	72.2
2010	Auburn	9	109.1
2009	Alabama	2	78.1
2008	Florida	15	105.4
2007	LSU	12	106.1
2006	Florida	5	72.5
2005	Texas	33	130.9
2004	USC	1	79.4
2003	LSU	3	67.0
2002	Ohio State	3	77.7

What does it mean for this season? If you really like a team against the run, you might want to head to Vegas. We recommend checking out our list of the top 10 defensive lines in the country elsewhere in the magazine.

Illustration by Tim Williams

THE TWEET LIFE

When Arizona athletic director Greg Byrne fired Mike Stoops at midseason, he and his marketing staff set out a strategy to unveil whoever became the next head coach. That plan included top-level secrecy and breaking the news via Twitter.

Welcome to football/life/technology/social media in 2012.

Byrne followed through on the idea, improved upon after a suggestion from his wife, Regina.

"We were flying into the Detroit airport to pick up Coach (Rich) Rodriguez and his family and I asked her, 'What should I put in the tweet?'" Byrne said. "And it was her idea to use a picture."

So Regina snapped a picture of her husband with the Rodriguez family, and Byrne tweeted: "And the new Arizona football coach and his family is....." with a link to a photo. As of late April, that photo had been viewed more than 68,000 times.

It is believed to be the first major coaching hire announced via Twitter, and it surely isn't going to be the last.

Whether it's hirings and firings, recruiting news, injury updates, practice reports, press conference ramblings or in-game reports, fans and media alike are twitcuffed to their smartphones. The fullest experience of being a college football fan is waiting on Twitter — with players, schools, reporters and, *ahem*, the staff of venerable preseason magazines offering an overload of information.

Some of it valuable.

- Twitter was the only place for immediate and unfiltered reaction from Pitt players when Todd Graham bolted for Arizona State after only one season. Several Panthers, feeling burned by the coach's sudden departure, took to their Twitter accounts, including defensive end Brandon Lindsey, who wrote: "For someone who said they read the Bible everyday, he must've missed the pg that said 'thou shall not lie.'"
- Mississippi State painted a Twitter hashtag — #HAILSTATE — in one of its endzones for last year's game against Ole Miss. Michigan and Arkansas followed suit with promotional hashtags on their fields for their spring games.
- As of late April, Matt Barkley — *Lindy's* preseason Offensive Player of the Year — had more than 53,000 followers. That's a start. Our preseason Defensive Player of the Year, Tyrann Mathieu, had close to a staggering 115,000.

Get on board ... or get left behind.

"It's just the reality of the world we're in that news and information is going to break on Twitter, so who's going to be the one to break it?" Byrne said.

The breaking news is nice — for example, Notre Dame announced with a tweet this spring that defensive end Aaron Lynch was transferring — but athletic departments everywhere are wary of TMI — too much information.

Compliance staffs are monitoring athlete's accounts for offensive comments — Michigan pulled its scholarship offer from four-star cornerback Yuri Wright after a series of foul tweets this winter — while educating players and boosters about improper contact with recruits. Notre Dame tight end Tyler Eifert ran afoul of the NCAA rule book when he mentioned a recruit's official campus visit on his Twitter account.

"Getting your arms around it completely is easier said than done," Byrne said. "We set guidelines for our athletes and I tell them, 'Just imagine that whatever you put on your account will end on the ESPN ticker.' That registers with some more than others."

Purdue coach Danny Hope scoffed at the use of Twitter this spring, saying, "To me, tweeting is a lot like keeping a diary. Back in the day, men didn't keep diaries to share our secrets, so I don't get the Twitter thing."

COACHING CHANGES

Given who has returned to the sidelines this fall, 2012 in college football is the Year of the Comeback Coaches.

Six guys who spent time out of the major college game are back for another go in careers that have featured some high peaks.

Urban Meyer and Rich Rodriguez won 10 games multiple times and hope to reprise that success in new locales. The others — Terry Bowden, Mike Leach, Bob Davie and Charlie Weis — also had moments of greatness and are back at it.

Add former NFL head coach Jim Mora Jr., and that's seven noteworthy names to jump all at once right back into the fray.

The coming season also affords some former offensive "gurus" the chance to show that their acumen stretches beyond the coordinator's office. Norm Chow, Paul Chryst, Jim McElwain and Gus Malzahn will undoubtedly find new challenges now that they are responsible for whole football teams.

Fourteen of the 27 jobs that changed hands came in the six BCS automatic-qualifying conferences, including four in the Pacific 12 and three apiece in the Big Ten and SEC.

Of course, the roster of college head coaches lacks the name Joe Paterno for the first time in 47 years. Following his removal at Penn State in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky scandal, Paterno died in January after a short battle with lung cancer.

Also not coaching this fall, for a variety of reasons, are former sideline fixtures Bobby Petrino, Howard Schnellenberger, Pat Hill, Ron Zook, Houston Nutt and Rick Neuheisel.

Akron

Out: Rob Ianello | **In:** Terry Bowden

Bowden ended a 10-year hiatus from coaching in 2009 when he left a broadcasting career to take over at Division II North Alabama. Three playoff appearances later, he earned the surprise hire at Akron, which hasn't had a winning season since 2005 and was 2-22 in Ianello's only two seasons. The Zips have fantastic facilities, and Bowden has a fertile recruiting ground in Northeast Ohio, which has given birth to unwavering optimism with their goofy kangaroo mascot ... and new T-shirts that read, "Fear the Dadgum Roo."

Arizona

Out: Mike Stoops | **In:** Rich Rodriguez

The Wildcats hope the classic "polar opposite" hire can eventually get them to their first Rose Bowl. Out goes Stoops, a defensive specialist with little public presence, and in comes the glad-handing RichRod, with his flashy offense. Rodriguez's defense couldn't stop anyone at Michigan, but this time he convinced his former West Virginia coordinator, Jeff Casteel, to come along for the ride and install his 3-3-5 scheme.

Arizona State

Out: Dennis Erickson | **In:** Todd Graham

After the Sun Devils reportedly put so much of their eggs in Kevin Sumlin's basket, it took them a while to figure out what to do after Sumlin went instead to Texas A&M. Rich Rodriguez's former linebackers coach at West Virginia, Graham had spent 11 months in Pittsburgh, where the Panthers went 6-6. Comically, he was quoted as calling three of his assistants who left for Rodriguez's staff "nothing but mercenaries," and two weeks later left for ASU to go head-up with those guys. He will be leading his fourth team in seven seasons (Rice, Tulsa, Pitt, ASU).

Arkansas

Out: Bobby Petrino | **In:** John L. Smith

Petrino's 21-5 record the past two seasons and the return of quarterback Tyler Wilson and running back Knile Davis, among many others, had Hog fans thinking BCS title. Then he had to go for a Sunday-afternoon motorcycle ride and the whole thing came crashing down in a scandal that harkens to another Arkansan and a previous, uh, personal shortcoming (that one was in the White House).

Arkansas State

Out: Hugh Freeze | **In:** Gus Malzahn

The most head-scratching job change of the offseason belongs to Malzahn, who was making $1.3 million as Auburn's offensive coordinator before taking a half-million-dollar pay cut to take over the Red Wolves, who got to go to the GoDaddy.com Bowl as a reward for a 10-win season last year. Coach Hugh Freeze's reward for his one year at ASU was a rich contract at Ole Miss. If Malzahn had any second thoughts over his decision, they probably multiplied when Bobby Petrino melted down at Arkansas. That could have been Malzahn's job, if only the timing were different.

Colorado State

Out: Steve Fairchild | **In:** Jim McElwain

Colorado State put up $6.5 million and a five-year deal to grab McElwain away from Alabama, where the Tide won two BCS titles in his three years as offensive coordinator. Moving to Fort Collins is a nice move for the Missoula, Mont., native, who played at Eastern Washington, coached at EWU and Montana State, spent a year on Art Shell's staff with the Oakland Raiders, and was the offensive coordinator at Fresno State when Nick Saban called in 2008. He won't have much pressure immediately, given the Rams' 3-9 marks in each of the past three years.

Florida Atlantic

Out: Howard Schnellenberger | **In:** Carl Pelini

Bo Pelini's big brother gets his chance as a head coach. Schnellenberger deserved better than a 1-11 farewell in the final season of a sterling career that saw him recruit Joe Namath to Alabama to play for Bear Bryant, start the Miami dynasty with freshman QB Bernie Kosar, win a national title in 1983 and take Louisville to a Fiesta Bowl. He shepherded FAU into Division I and built the 30,000-seat stadium that Pelini will try to fill.

Fresno State

Out: Pat Hill | **In:** Tim DeRuyter

Hill took Fresno State to the precipice by "playing anybody, anytime, anywhere," but could never quite get the Bulldogs over the top. Still, it was a shock when FSU canned him following 11 bowl games in 15 seasons. DeRuyter, a Californian who

spent the past two years as Texas A&M's defensive coordinator, faces a challenge duplicating Hill's 112-80 record. But bettering Hill's 40-41 mark over his final seven seasons is definitely do-able.

Hawaii

Out: Greg McMackin | **In:** Norm Chow

It took five schools, four decades and three national championships as a college assistant before Chow finally became a head coach. A native Hawaiian, Chow is a natural fit for the Warriors, who have seen declining attendance even though the "retiring" McMackin had led two bowl trips in his four years. Chow's first game will be at the L.A. Coliseum, where he helped Pete Carroll and USC win a pair of national championships.

Houston

Out: Kevin Sumlin | **In:** Tony Levine

If Levine's first season goes anything like his first game, Houston will look savvy for promoting him from assistant head coach to take over when Sumlin left for Texas A&M. The Cougars responded with a 30-14 win over Penn State in the Ticket City Bowl. Now we'll see if Levine, who's been a part of 35 Houston wins in four seasons as an assistant, can win without Case Keenum.

Illinois

Out: Ron Zook | **In:** Tim Beckman

Midway through the 2011 season, Illinois was 6-0 and fireronzook.com was being laughed at. But the original "fireyourcoach website" had the last laugh, as the Illini stumbled through a six-game losing streak and Zook was finally fired. Beckman, meantime, rescued Toledo from the dregs and a point-shaving scandal to go 21-16 in three seasons, with two bowl games. Not the most exciting hire, but the Mid-American Conference to Big Ten highway has been successful for some in the past.

Kansas

Out: Turner Gill | **In:** Charlie Weis

Weis didn't seem to like Kansas very much two years ago when he worked for the Chiefs, but he injected himself into the Jayhawks' search late and came away with the job. He'll try to dig out from a 5-19 mark in Turner Gill's two seasons. Count the people of South Bend skeptical, given Weis' steady decline over a five-year stay at Notre Dame. Gill was hired as head coach at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University.

Memphis

Out: Larry Porter | **In:** Justin Fuente

After coaching with Les Miles at Oklahoma State and LSU, Porter got his first head coaching job ... and went 1-11 and 2-10 before the former Memphis Tigers running back was fired after only two years. So, as Porter becomes running backs coach at Arizona State, there's no high bar for Fuente to scale. He served as Texas Christian's co-offensive coordinator last season. He'll have to get busy quickly in order to have Memphis ready for a move to the Big East next year.

New Mexico

Out: Mike Locksley | **In:** Bob Davie

Locksley struggled through off-field controversy in Albuquerque and never built on the promise he showed either as a recruiter and assistant at Illinois, when the Illini made it to the Rose Bowl. He was fired midseason, and the Lobos had a chance to fully assess Davie as a candidate. They hope he is re-energized after a decade away from the sideline (and mostly in the ESPN broadcast booth) since his firing at Notre Dame, where he had two nine-win seasons in five years, including one BCS bowl. Davie, remember, built his reputation with the "Wrecking Crew" defense at Texas A&M in the 1990s.

North Carolina

Out: Butch Davis/Everett Withers
In: Larry Fedora

Davis got the boot just before the 2011 season, leaving the Tar Heels in a bad spot — but not as bad as forfeiting all of their wins from 2008 and 2009, when Davis used ineligible players. Although not directly

CAREER COACHING VICTORIES

For years we tracked the chase between Florida State's Bobby Bowden and Penn State's Joe Paterno to be the winningest coach in major college football. Paterno got there first, beating Ohio State in 2001 to eclipse Bear Bryant's 323 wins.

JoePa just kept on going for another decade, working the sideline (or the press box) two years after Bowden had retired, reaching a record of 409-136-3 when the Nittany Lions beat Illinois on Oct. 29. That would be his last game, fired amid the scandal involving former Penn State assistant Jerry Sandusky. Paterno, 85, died in January after battling lung cancer.

John Gagliardi, still coaching at Division III power St. John's at the age of 85, holds the all-time coaching mark with a record of 484-133-11 in an astounding 63 seasons. As for the FBS level, nobody is within 150 victories of JoePa.

Virginia Tech's Frank Beamer is the new No. 1 with 251 wins. He and Mack Brown are the current standards for longevity and success at the highest level, each having advanced to bowls in 19 of the past 20 seasons.

Brown is under contract through the 2020 season, when he would be pushing 70. Even if he averages 10 wins in the next nine seasons, he'd still be 92 victories behind Paterno.

Here are the winningest coaches in the FBS (not all these victories came at the major college level, but we're counting them all):

NO.	COACH, CURRENT TEAM	YEARS	AGE	W-L-T	PCT.
1.	Frank Beamer, Virginia Tech	31	65	251-120-4	67.5
2.	Mack Brown, Texas	28	61	227-113-1	66.7
3.	Chris Ault, Nevada	27	65	226-103-1	68.6
4.	Steve Spurrier, South Carolina	22	67	197-75-2	72.3
5.	Dennis Franchione, Texas State	26	61	193-107-2	64.2
6.	Brian Kelly, Notre Dame	21	50	187-67-2	73.4
7.	Mike Price, UTEP	30	66	174-174-0	50.0
8.	Larry Blakeney, Troy	21	64	164-91-1	64.1
9.	Bill Snyder, Kansas State	20	72	159-83-1	65.8
10.	Gary Pinkel, Missouri	21	60	158-91-3	62.5

**Age at start of the season*

implicated in an NCAA agent and academic scandal, there was too much smoke on his clothes to survive. Withers did a solid job as interim coach (7-6), and has since been hired by Urban Meyer as co-defensive coordinator at Ohio State. Fedora arrives from Southern Mississippi, where he went 34-19 in four years, including 12-2 last season.

Ohio State

Out: Luke Fickell | **In:** Urban Meyer

The worst-kept secret in coaching searches ended with Meyer's departure from the ESPN booth for the only job he said could have lured him back to the sideline. He inherits a 6-7 team and his predecessor. Fickell was retained as defensive coordinator at the same salary he made last year as Jim Tressel's interim successor. Meyer, of course, has a 65-12 record with two national championship rings, but he burned out terribly at Florida and reportedly lost control of his team.

Mississippi

Out: Houston Nutt | **In:** Hugh Freeze

The purveyor of the Wild Hog and the Wild Rebel has given way to Michael Oher's high school coach in "The Blind Side." Nutt's decline at Ole Miss (from successive nine-win seasons to 4-8 and 2-10) was remarkably sudden. In the meantime, Freeze's ascent to the job is just as remarkable. He wowed them in his one year at Arkansas State, where he was the lowest-paid coach in major-college football ($200,000).

Penn State

Out: Joe Paterno | **In:** Bill O'Brien

The issue here is how O'Brien will be able to progress with the smoldering anger surrounding Paterno's dismissal. The hiring of O'Brien seemed to be a purposeful turning to the outside, and was not greeted warmly by Nittany Lion Nation. O'Brien comes from the New England Patriots, where he served as offensive coordinator. For what it's worth, he went to Brown ... which means all the Penn State head coaches since 1966 have gone to Brown.

Pittsburgh

Out: Todd Graham | **In:** Paul Chryst

Chryst, the former Wisconsin offensive coordinator, enters through the revolving door, becoming the fourth Pitt coach inside of 13 months. The Panthers have the introductory press conference down. It's the keeping of the coach that needs to improve. Graham bolted after 11 months, following Mike Haywood (15 days on the job before being fired when he was arrested on domestic violence charges), and Dave Wannstedt (six seasons).

Rutgers

Out: Greg Schiano | **In:** Kyle Flood

It seems like Schiano did this just about as well as you can do it. He helped build Rutgers into a reputable, competitive program, did not jump at the first couple of chances to cash in, but after 11 seasons (including 49-28 with five bowls in the past six years), he is taking his chance in the NFL. Rutgers was reportedly close to hiring FIU coach Mario Cristobal, but by promoting Flood, the offensive line coach for seven years, the Scarlet Knights retained most of their recruiting class in the aftermath of Schiano's January departure for Tampa Bay.

Southern Mississippi

Out: Larry Fedora | **In:** Ellis Johnson

Johnson will be able to preach the "never give up" gospel to his players, since he tried for the Southern Miss job in 2008 when Fedora was hired. Johnson comes from South Carolina, where he was assistant head coach and defensive coordinator. Fedora went 33-19 in four seasons.

Texas A&M

Out: Mike Sherman | **In:** Kevin Sumlin

Sumlin and his high-scoring offense gets the challenge of ushering A&M into the SEC. He went 35-17 in four years at Houston and was a hot property on the coaching circuit last year. Arizona State and Illinois flirted with him, but he returned to College Station, where he had been an assistant under RC Slocum in 2001. Sherman, the former Packers coach who enjoyed just one winning season in his four at A&M, is back in the NFL as Dolphins offensive coordinator.

Toledo

Out: Tim Beckman | **In:** Matt Campbell

The Rockets' flashy offense earned this job for Campbell, their coordinator, even though he is just 32. Beckman wanted to take him along to Illinois, but Toledo hopes Campbell was the big reason it averaged more than 42 points a game last season.

Tulane

Out: Bob Toledo | **In:** Curtis Johnson

This seemed like a head-scratching hire until Bounty Gate blew up with the New Orleans Saints, where Johnson coached wide receivers since 2006. Maybe he knew something. Maybe Tulane knows something. Johnson has been only a receivers coach in a 24-year career. He's never been a coordinator, let alone run the show. But Toledo had tons of experience running offenses and being a head coach ... and that didn't work out so well, either.

UAB

Out: Neil Callaway | **In:** Garrick McGee

McGee, who left his position as offensive coordinator at Arkansas, is tackling his first head-coaching job — and he's looking at a steep climb. The Blazers have gone 26-57 in the past seven seasons, and McGee will have to overcome an apathetic fan base.

UCLA

Out: Rick Neuheisel | **In:** Jim Mora Jr.

Neuheisel was snake-bit at the quarterback position for all four of his seasons, miscalculated in switching to the Pistol offense halfway through, and stumbled to a 21-29 record. Mora knows a little about being snake-bit. He was fired by the Atlanta Falcons after kidding on Seattle radio his dream job was in Seattle at the University of Washington, and that he'd leave "even if we were in a playoff run." Then he joined the Seattle Seahawks staff, spent a year as Mike Holmgren's replacement-in-waiting, but after Holmgren "retired" in 2008, Mora lasted only a year before USC's Pete Carroll came available ... and the Seahawks fired Mora to hire Carroll.

Washington State

Out: Paul Wulff | **In:** Mike Leach

The Palouse is a lot of open country — plenty of space for Leach to swing his sword. If he can approach his 10-year record at Texas Tech (84-43, 10 bowl appearances), Washington State will be delirious. The Cougars showed annual progress, but didn't manage a winning season in four years under Wulff and hasn't been above .500 since 2003.

SNEAK PEEK

The best and most productive players in college aren't always the ones most coveted by the NFL, which is why we always ask our pals from NFLDraftScout.com to give us a long-range pro perspective.

From this distance, it appears that the 2013 NFL Draft could be a good one for pocket passers.

USC's Matt Barkley, who was in the top 10 of this list last year as an underclassman, is No. 1. No surprise. But a pair of SEC quarterbacks — Tennessee's Tyler Bray and Arkansas' Tyler Wilson — are also in the top five.

Befitting its status as the nation's best conference, the SEC has 15 of the top 28 draft-eligible prospects, according to NFLDraftScout.com.

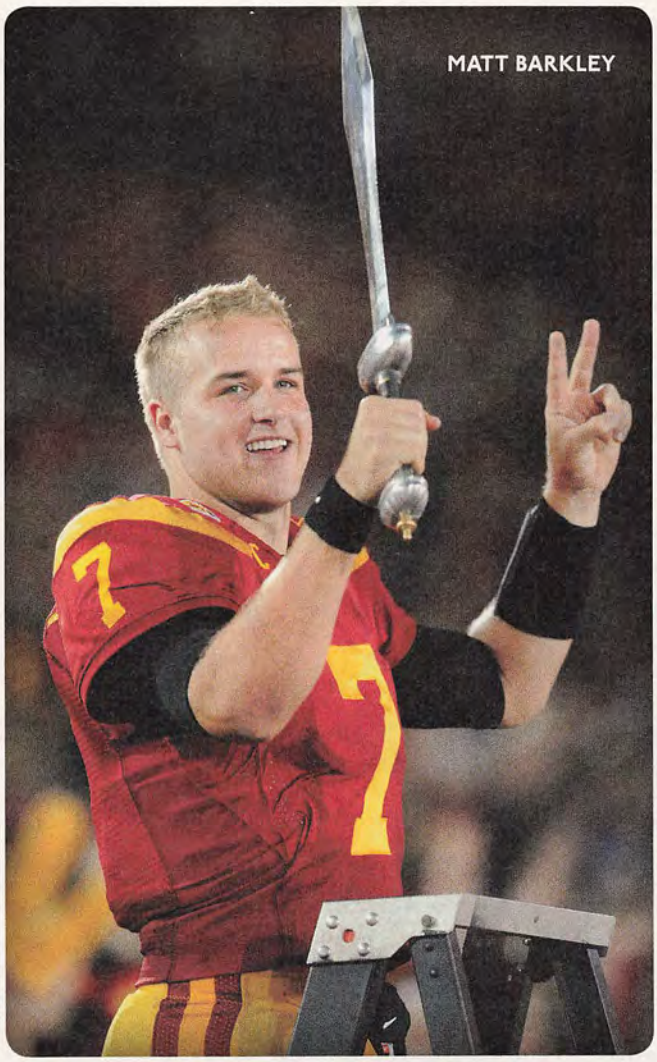
MATT BARKLEY

Photo by Joe Robbins

NO.	PLAYER	POS.	SCHOOL
1.	Matt Barkley	QB	USC
2.	Barkevious Mingo*	DE	LSU
3.	Tyler Bray*	QB	Tennessee
4.	Johnathan Hankins*	DT	Ohio State
5.	Tyler Wilson	QB	Arkansas
6.	Robert Woods*	WR	USC
7.	Marcus Lattimore*	RB	South Carolina
8.	Alex Okafor	DE	Texas
9.	Manti Te'o	LB	Notre Dame
10.	Justin Hunter*	WR	Tennessee
11.	Dominique Easley*	DT	Florida
12.	Bjoern Werner*	DE	Florida State
13.	Jarvis Jones*	OLB	Georgia
14.	Keenan Allen*	WR	California
15.	Corey Lemonier*	DE	Auburn
16.	Tyrann Mathieu*	CB	LSU
17.	Montee Ball	RB	Wisconsin
18.	Brandon Jenkins	DE	Florida State
19.	David Amerson*	CB	NC State
20.	Barrett Jones	OL	Alabama
21.	Kenny Stills*	WR	Oklahoma
22.	Knile Davis	RB	Arkansas
23.	Bennie Logan*	DT	LSU
24.	Johnthan Banks	CB	Mississippi State
25.	Sam Montgomery*	DE	LSU
26.	DeAndre Hopkins*	WR	Clemson
27.	Kevin Reddick	LB	North Carolina
28.	Sean Porter*	LB	Texas A&M
29.	Landry Jones	QB	Oklahoma
30.	William Gholston*	DE	Michigan State
31.	Tyler Eifert*	TE	Notre Dame
32.	Jackson Jeffcoat*	DE	Texas
33.	Chance Warmack*	G	Alabama
34.	John Simon	DL	Ohio State
35.	Kawann Short	DT	Purdue
36.	Joseph Randle*	RB	Oklahoma State
37.	Alex Hurst	OT	LSU
38.	Craig Roh	LB	Michigan
39.	Jonathan Cooper	G	North Carolina
40.	Oday Aboushi	OT	Virginia
41.	Terrance Williams	WR	Baylor
42.	D.J. Fluker*	OT	Alabama
43.	Robert Lester	S	Alabama
44.	Logan Thomas*	QB	Virginia Tech
45.	Tony Jefferson*	S	Oklahoma
46.	Ricky Wagner	OT	Wisconsin
47.	Matt Elam*	S	Florida
48.	Xavier Nixon	OT	Florida
49.	Kwame Geathers*	DT	Georgia
50.	T.J. McDonald	S	USC

*Underclassman

TOP 12 NON-CONFERENCE GAMES

1. MICHIGAN VS. ALABAMA, SEPT. 1 (COWBOYS STADIUM, ARLINGTON, TEXAS)

The up-and-comers from Ann Arbor are looking to climb all the way back against the defending national champs. Can the Wolverines' Denard Robinson be enough of a passing threat? Will the Tide's revamped defensive front roar from the start?

2. NOTRE DAME AT OKLAHOMA, OCT. 27

These college football pillars have met just nine times; just once since 1968. The most recent meeting came in 1999, which was Bob Stoops' first season in Norman. The Irish have had six head coaches since 1999, including George O'Leary, if only for a few minutes.

3. MICHIGAN AT NOTRE DAME, SEPT. 22

This has provided great theater over the years, and last year's was a classic under the lights in the Big House in front of an NCAA-record crowd of 114,804. The Irish, wearing three-leaf clovers on their helmets, scored a TD with 30 seconds left to take the lead, but the Wolverines stunned ND with a long pass and a 16-yard touchdown toss with two seconds left for a 35-31 win.

4. BOISE STATE AT MICHIGAN STATE, AUG. 31

You don't want to mess with the Broncos early, as they have opened the past three seasons by beating Oregon, Virginia Tech and Georgia. All of that, however, was with now-departed quarterback Kellen Moore.

5. FLORIDA AT FLORIDA STATE, NOV. 24

Second-year Gators coach Will Muschamp has to make up ground after losing his debut in the rivalry, 21-7. Florida State has regained the upper hand after losing six in a row, winning the past two meetings and holding Florida to a touchdown each time.

6. SOUTH CAROLINA AT CLEMSON, NOV. 24

The Tigers, especially coach Dabo Swinney, are desperate after losing the past three meetings by a combined 60 points. We're due for a thriller, with a top ACC offense going against a robust SEC defense.

7. NOTRE DAME AT USC, NOV. 24

This is the end of an arduous schedule for the Irish, while the Trojans (presumably runaway champs of the Pac-12 South) will be tuning up for the conference title game and possibly looking for Matt Barkley's Heisman moment. Lane Kiffin and Brian Kelly have split their two meetings.

8. BYU AT UTAH, SEPT. 15

These Holy War rivals went separate ways after the 2010 season — the Utes to the Pac-12 and the Cougars to independence. After extending the heated series for two years, this could be the sad end of the road.

9. AUBURN VS. CLEMSON, SEPT. 1 (ATLANTA)

Clemson hits the field eager to rinse away the taste of the beatdown from West Virginia in the Orange Bowl. Auburn needs to build momentum for the ensuing four-week march that includes games at Mississippi State, vs. LSU and vs. Arkansas.

10. MIAMI VS. NOTRE DAME, OCT. 6 (CHICAGO)

We'd like it better if this was a time-machine game back to the late 1980s, with Lou Holtz and Jimmy Johnson on the sidelines. We'll settle for two programs scratching back for glory at Soldier Field in their first regular-season meeting since '90.

11. WASHINGTON AT LSU, SEPT. 8

Hard to see the Huskies solving LSU's defense, even with quarterback Keith Price, but it's a potentially tricky early test for the Tigers, who open against North Texas.

12. NAVY VS. NOTRE DAME, SEPT. 1 (DUBLIN, IRELAND)

The location is a novelty. The pain Notre Dame feels after losing three of the last five to the Midshipmen is real.

Photo by Rick Osentoski-US PRESSWIRE

MICHIGAN VS. NOTRE DAME

Photo by John David Mercer-US PRESSWIRE

ALABAMA VS. LSU

TOP 12 CONFERENCE GAMES

1. ALABAMA AT LSU, NOV. 3

Will both teams get here undefeated? LSU has previous games at Auburn, Florida and Texas A&M, as well as a home showdown vs. South Carolina. The Tide will have to navigate a neutral-site game vs. Michigan and trips to Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee. It could all be a prelude to Game of the Century III.

2. OREGON AT USC, NOV. 3

So, how are you liking Nov. 3 so far? The Trojans shocked the fourth-ranked Ducks last season, ending Oregon's 21-game winning streak in Autzen. Best news: This matchup, flush with playmakers, should be only the first of two, with the rematch coming in the conference title game.

3. MICHIGAN AT OHIO STATE, NOV. 24

This is getting good, again. Michigan is back to being Michigan. Urban is at Ohio State. Denard Robinson. Braxton Miller. The Buckeyes, ineligible for the postseason, can be the ultimate spoiler to "that school up north" as the Wolverines could very well be looking to put a bow on the Legends Division. Michigan, which snapped a seven-game series skid last season, hasn't partied in Columbus since 2000.

4. GEORGIA AT MISSOURI; FLORIDA AT TEXAS A&M, SEPT. 8

The SEC set up its newbies with attractive home games to start the conference season. How accommodating. And then watch the SEC eat its young ... if it can.

5. MICHIGAN STATE AT WISCONSIN, OCT. 27

These teams played two great ones last season, the Spartans winning on a Hail Mary in the regular season and the Badgers one-upping MSU with a come-from-behind 42-39 win in the Big Ten Championship Game. This is the middle of a brutal stretch for Sparty — after a game at Michigan and before a game vs. Nebraska.

6. LSU AT ARKANSAS, NOV. 24

Last day of the regular season. SEC West title at stake?

7. OKLAHOMA VS. TEXAS, OCT. 13 (DALLAS)

A rivalry that stays in the Big 12. Hooray for tradition.

8. OKLAHOMA AT WEST VIRGINIA, NOV. 17

A new non-traditional rivalry that could become one of the best in the Big 12. Hooray for change.

9. GEORGIA AT SOUTH CAROLINA, OCT. 6

The heaviest hitters from the SEC Eastern Division will try to land a few haymakers, while Steve Spurrier fires barbs from outside the ring.

10. ALABAMA AT ARKANSAS, SEPT. 15

After opening against Jacksonville State and Louisiana-Monroe, the Bobby Petrino-less Hogs will see if they still have a chance to be special.

11. MICHIGAN STATE AT MICHIGAN, OCT. 20

Brady Hoke solved Ohio State last season. To be a Legends leader, he has to get his Wolverines to end a four-game skid against State.

12. CLEMSON AT FLORIDA STATE, SEPT. 22

The frontrunner for the ACC Atlantic Division emerges after this game. Mark Stoops' FSU defense is still smarting after giving up 455 yards to the Tigers in a 35-30 loss last season.

COMEBACK PLAYERS

Injuries are part of the game, and so is coming back from them. Here is a look at 10 players who missed all, or a significant part, of last season, including some high-profile running backs:

Knile Davis, RB, Arkansas (broken ankle)
He didn't have any contact in the spring but is expected to have the burst and the cuts that led to an All-SEC sophomore season in which he ran for 1,322 yards and 13 touchdowns. Missed all of last season.

Ray Graham, RB, Pittsburgh (knee)
With 939 yards through six games last year, Graham was on pace for a 2,000-yard season. He is hoping to be 100 percent by fall camp for new coach Paul Chryst.

Montel Harris, RB, Boston College (knee)
He's BC's career rushing leader (3,735 yards) and was granted an extra year of eligibility after playing in only two games last year. Sad news, though: His 2012 season was in doubt after re-injuring the knee at the start of spring.

Justin Hunter, WR, Tennessee (knee)
The tall, speedy sophomore has averaged 22.4 yards a catch in a little more than a season. He blew out his knee in the third game last year when he was leading the SEC in receptions.

Marcus Lattimore, RB, South Carolina (knee)
Was still recovering this spring from a torn ACL suffered in October, when he was leading the SEC in rushing. The outlook was positive for the junior, who can't be stopped even by SEC defenses; he has four games of at least 176 yards vs. the SEC.

Brandon Magee, LB, Arizona State (Achilles' tendon)
The former ASU coaching staff was saying last year that Magee was the team's best linebacker (at least the one with his head on the straightest) before the injury in fall camp. Magee, who made 73 tackles as a junior in 2010, should have no trouble replacing the modest production and lack of leadership from departed would-be superstar Vontaze Burfict.

Kenny Tate, LB, Maryland (knee)
The former All-ACC safety moved to linebacker before last season, which seemed like a curious move, but he's staying there as the Terps put in a 3-4 scheme this spring under new coordinator Brian Stewart. If the defense is as aggressive as promised, Tate should be one of the nation's top defensive playmakers.

Jeff Tuel, QB, Washington St. (collar bone)
Tuel, limited to three games last season because of a variety of ailments, was sensational in the spring game. He could face competition when sophomore Connor Halliday returns in the fall from a liver injury, but Tuel is the one most likely to benefit from Mike Leach's offense.

Nathan Williams, DE, Ohio State (knee)
Projected to be the Buckeyes' top defender last season as a senior, he had to shut it down after one game, eventually needing microfracture surgery. He was still healing as he sat out spring drills, but Ohio State is hopeful that Williams (21.5 career tackles for loss) can team with John Simon and others to create a formidable front line in the fall.

Arizona's ACL army
Here's a special, uh, honor for first-year coach Rich Rodriguez and the Wildcats, who have five players coming back from ACL tears. Ouch, make that four, because safety Adam Hall, the team's hardest hitter and a projected leader, is out again after ripping up the same knee in the spring game. Linebacker Jake Fischer looked great in the spring, though, and defensive tackle Willie Mobley and running back Greg Nwoko were also back for spring ball. Jonathan McKnight, the team's best cornerback, was on pace for a fall camp return.

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Sincerely,
Lindy Davis
Publisher

Lindy's SPORTS ANNUALS

Sidelines 2012

1. The Great Outdoors
Sarah, a senior Marketing major from Huntsville, Ala., enjoys anything outdoors … fishing, cooking out, being on the lake, hunting with her dad, and of course, cheering on the sideline at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

2. Clear as a Crystal
Emily is an Elementary Education major from Crystal Lakes, Ill. who dances with the Illinettes Dance Team. Reading and traveling are among her favorites. It's crystal clear why Illini fans are glad she came their way.

3
4
5
6
SOUTHE
MISS

7

8

3. Here Comes the Sun

Eva is from Louisville, a sophomore Biology major who enjoys playing softball. Pulling hard for the Miami Hurricanes, she's a member of their dance team, the Sunsations … sensational!

4. Home Sweet Home

Sara, a senior Elementary Education major, has been marching with the Auburn band for four years. A native of Auburn, Ala., and a big Tiger fan, when it came time for college, why look anywhere else?

5. The Eagles Have Landed

A first-year college student, Summer landed in Hattiesburg to major in Healthcare Marketing. Her interests are varied — deep sea fishing, mountain bike riding, photography, tennis … and cheering for the Eagles of Southern Miss.

6. Taytum of Tallahassee

A sophomore from Baker County, Fla., Taytum loves cheerleading, boating and skeet shooting. She's an Exercise Science major … appropriate since she gets so much exercise cheering for the Seminoles.

7. Dancing for a Tiger Title

With her LSU team favored for the national title, Ragen can enjoy dancing with the Golden Band from Tigerland even more. She's an Industrial Engineering major from Franklinton, La., and has five younger siblings.

8. All Smiles

Taylor, a sophomore from Cabot, Ark., has a lot to smile about … spending time with family, and cheering for her beloved Razorbacks, who are national title contenders. Her major — Health Sciences (Dental Hygiene), of course.

9. Go West Young Man
Amanda is certainly not a man, but she did go west. A Biology major from Alabama, she passed on her home state schools to be a student in Oxford, Miss., where she is a cheerleader for Ole Miss.

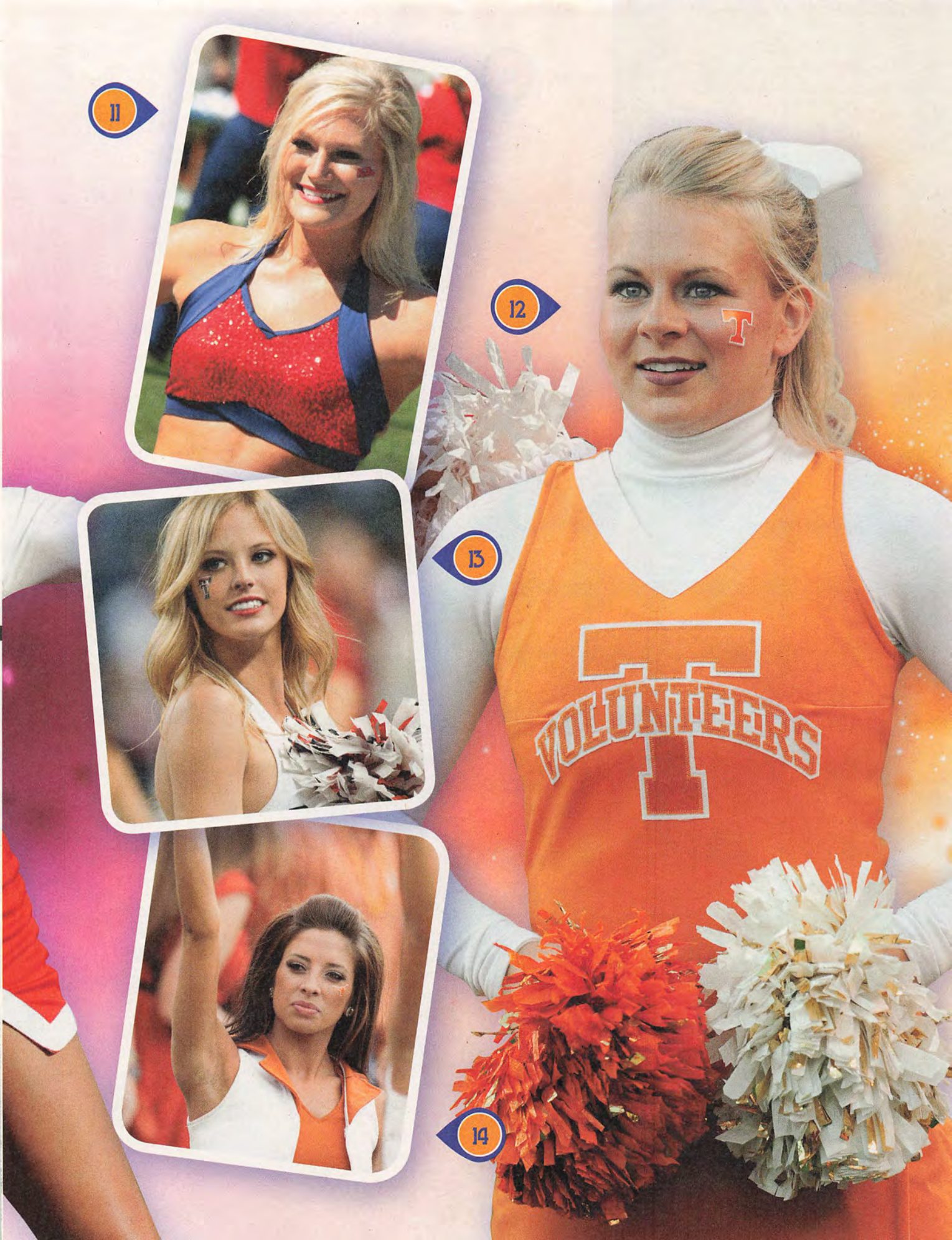
10. Laying Down the Law
The ruling is clear for Kara, a senior Psychology major from Grand Island, Neb. The 'Huskers have the "most respectful and loyal fans in the nation." The cheering squad captain, she plans to attend law school.

11. Student of the Game
Caroline isn't just a Rebelette, cheering for Ole Miss. She understands football, its plays and its strategy. Too bad the team from Oxford doesn't play Oregon this season. One of her favorite things is duck hunting.

12. Really a Volunteer
Brittany is a junior co-captain of the Tennessee cheering squad, but she also finds time to do much more. She's on the FCA Leadership Team and serves as student member of the UT Athletic Board.

13. You Can 'Bank' On It
No doubt about where Abby stands … it's on the sideline in Lubbock, cheering for her Texas Tech Red Raiders. She'll have a minor in American Sign Language and loves playing with her dog … named "Banks."

14. Serious Business
Even though she's from Red Raider country in Lubbock, Brogan pulls for a different Texas team. She's a senior Business major, cheering for the Longhorns to bounce back this season … and that *is* serious business in Austin.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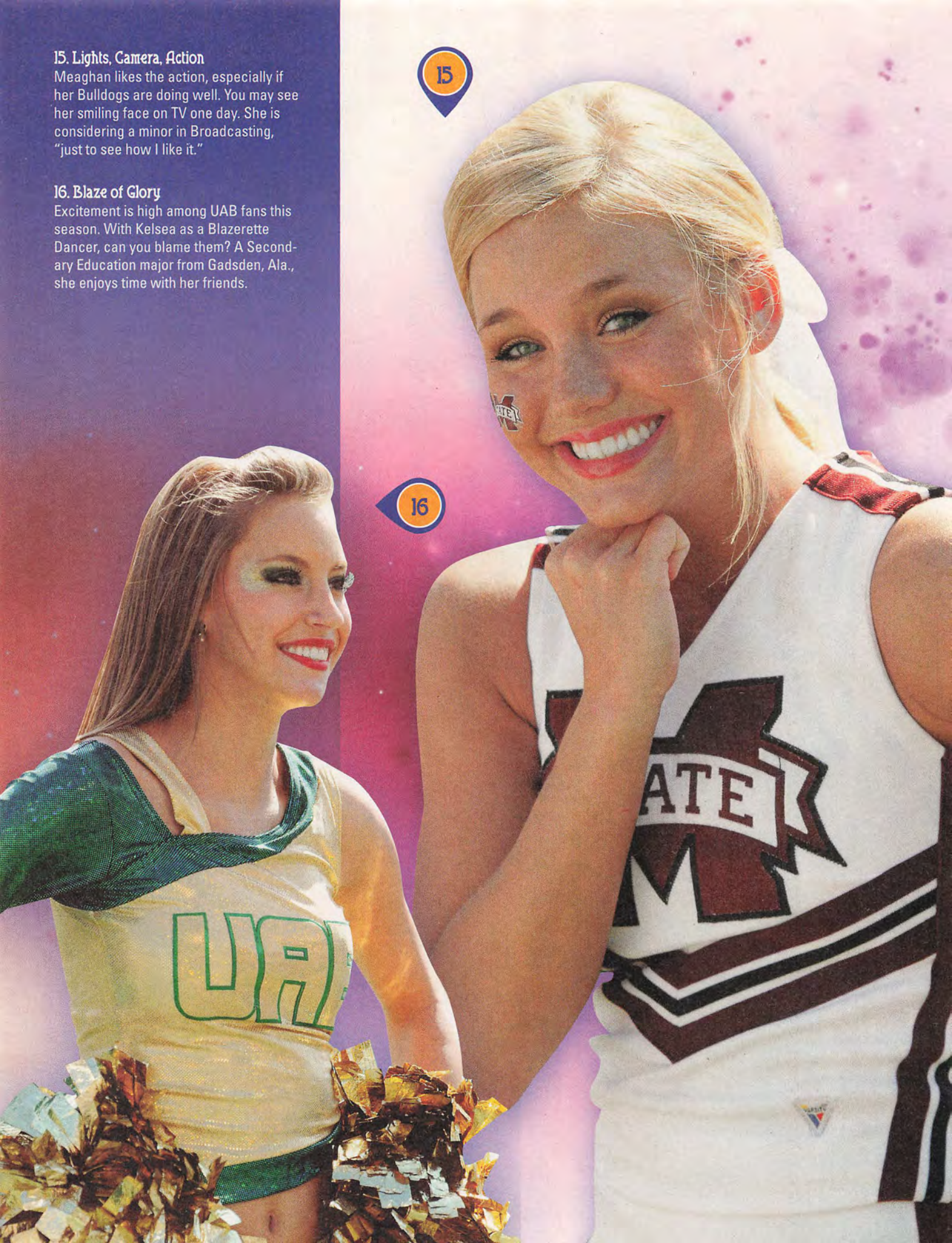
VOLUNTEERS

15. Lights, Camera, Action
Meaghan likes the action, especially if her Bulldogs are doing well. You may see her smiling face on TV one day. She is considering a minor in Broadcasting, "just to see how I like it."

16. Blaze of Glory
Excitement is high among UAB fans this season. With Kelsea as a Blazerette Dancer, can you blame them? A Secondary Education major from Gadsden, Ala., she enjoys time with her friends.



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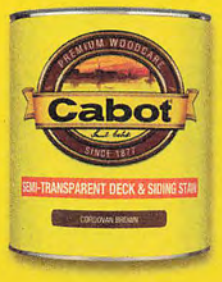

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Wrangler

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

ACC

BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 1 MIAMI
Sept. 8 MAINE
Sept. 15 at Northwestern
Sept. 29 CLEMSON
Oct. 6 at Army
Oct. 13 at Florida State
Oct. 20 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 27 MARYLAND
Nov. 3 at Wake Forest
Nov. 10 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 17 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 24 at NC State

CLEMSON
Sept. 1 vs. Auburn (Atlanta, GA)
Sept. 8 BALL STATE
Sept. 15 FURMAN
Sept. 22 at Florida State
Sept. 29 at Boston College
Oct. 6 GEORGIA TECH
Oct. 20 VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 25 at Wake Forest
Nov. 3 at Duke
Nov. 10 MARYLAND
Nov. 17 NC STATE
Nov. 24 SOUTH CAROLINA

DUKE
Sept. 1 FIU
Sept. 8 at Stanford
Sept. 15 N.C. CENTRAL
Sept. 22 MEMPHIS
Sept. 29 at Wake Forest
Oct. 6 VIRGINIA
Oct. 13 at Virginia Tech
Oct. 20 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 27 at Florida State
Nov. 3 CLEMSON
Nov. 17 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 24 MIAMI

FLORIDA STATE
Sept. 1 MURRAY STATE
Sept. 8 SAVANNAH STATE
Sept. 15 WAKE FOREST
Sept. 22 CLEMSON
Sept. 29 at South Florida
Oct. 6 at NC State
Oct. 13 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 20 at Miami
Oct. 27 DUKE
Nov. 8 at Virginia Tech
Nov. 17 at Maryland
Nov. 24 FLORIDA

GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 3 at Virginia Tech
Sept. 8 PRESBYTERIAN
Sept. 15 VIRGINIA
Sept. 22 MIAMI
Sept. 29 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 6 at Clemson
Oct. 20 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 27 BYU
Nov. 3 at Maryland
Nov. 10 at North Carolina
Nov. 17 DUKE
Nov. 24 at Georgia

MARYLAND
Sept. 1 WILLIAM & MARY
Sept. 8 at Temple
Sept. 15 CONNECTICUT
Sept. 22 at West Virginia
Oct. 6 WAKE FOREST
Oct. 13 at Virginia
Oct. 20 NC STATE
Oct. 27 at Boston College
Nov. 3 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 10 at Clemson
Nov. 17 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 24 at North Carolina

MIAMI
Sept. 1 at Boston College
Sept. 8 at Kansas State
Sept. 15 BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Sept. 22 at Georgia Tech
Sept. 29 NC STATE
Oct. 6 vs. Notre Dame (Chicago)
Oct. 13 NORTH CAROLINA
Oct. 20 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 1 VIRGINIA TECH
Nov. 10 at Virginia
Nov. 17 SOUTH FLORIDA
Nov. 24 at Duke

NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 1 ELON
Sept. 8 at Wake Forest
Sept. 15 at Louisville
Sept. 22 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 29 IDAHO
Oct. 6 VIRGINIA TECH
Oct. 13 at Miami
Oct. 20 at Duke
Oct. 27 NC STATE
Nov. 10 GEORGIA TECH
Nov. 15 at Virginia
Nov. 24 MARYLAND

NC STATE
Aug. 31 vs. Tennessee (Atlanta)
Sept. 8 at Connecticut
Sept. 15 SOUTH ALABAMA
Sept. 22 THE CITADEL
Sept. 29 at Miami
Oct. 6 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 20 at Maryland
Oct. 27 at North Carolina
Nov. 3 VIRGINIA
Nov. 10 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 17 at Clemson
Nov. 24 BOSTON COLLEGE

VIRGINIA
Sept. 1 RICHMOND
Sept. 8 PENN STATE
Sept. 15 at Georgia Tech
Sept. 22 at TCU
Sept. 29 LOUISIANA TECH
Oct. 6 at Duke
Oct. 13 MARYLAND
Oct. 20 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 3 at NC State
Nov. 10 MIAMI
Nov. 15 NORTH CAROLINA
Nov. 24 at Virginia Tech

VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 3 GEORGIA TECH
Sept. 8 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 15 at Pittsburgh
Sept. 22 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 29 vs. Cincinnati (Landover, MD)
Oct. 6 at North Carolina
Oct. 13 DUKE
Oct. 20 at Clemson
Nov. 1 at Miami
Nov. 8 FLORIDA STATE
Nov. 17 at Boston College
Nov. 24 VIRGINIA

WAKE FOREST
Sept. 1 LIBERTY
Sept. 8 NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 15 at Florida State
Sept. 22 ARMY
Sept. 29 DUKE
Oct. 6 at Maryland
Oct. 20 at Virginia
Oct. 25 CLEMSON
Nov. 3 BOSTON COLLEGE
Nov. 10 at NC State
Nov. 17 at Notre Dame
Nov. 24 VANDERBILT

BIG EAST

CINCINNATI
Sept. 6 PITTSBURGH
Sept. 15 DELAWARE STATE
Sept. 29 vs. Virginia Tech (Landover, MD)
Oct. 6 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 13 FORDHAM
Oct. 20 at Toledo
Oct. 26 at Louisville
Nov. 3 SYRACUSE
Nov. 10 at Temple
Nov. 17 RUTGERS
Nov. 23 SOUTH FLORIDA
Dec. 1 at Connecticut

CONNECTICUT
Aug. 30 MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 8 NC STATE
Sept. 15 at Maryland
Sept. 22 at Western Michigan
Sept. 29 BUFFALO
Oct. 6 at Rutgers
Oct. 13 TEMPLE
Oct. 19 at Syracuse
Nov. 3 at South Florida
Nov. 9 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 24 at Louisville
Dec. 1 CINCINNATI

LOUISVILLE
Sept. 2 KENTUCKY
Sept. 8 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 15 NORTH CAROLINA
Sept. 22 at FIU
Sept. 29 at Southern Miss
Oct. 13 at Pittsburgh
Oct. 20 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 26 CINCINNATI
Nov. 3 TEMPLE
Nov. 10 at Syracuse
Nov. 24 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 29 at Rutgers

PITTSBURGH
Sept. 1 YOUNGSTOWN STATE
Sept. 6 at Cincinnati
Sept. 15 VIRGINIA TECH
Sept. 22 at Gardner-Webb
Oct. 5 at Syracuse
Oct. 13 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 20 at Buffalo
Oct. 27 TEMPLE
Nov. 3 at Notre Dame
Nov. 9 at Connecticut
Nov. 24 RUTGERS
Dec. 1 at South Florida

RUTGERS
Sept. 1 at Tulane
Sept. 8 HOWARD
Sept. 13 at South Florida
Sept. 22 at Arkansas
Oct. 6 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 13 SYRACUSE
Oct. 20 at Temple
Oct. 27 KENT STATE
Nov. 10 ARMY
Nov. 17 at Cincinnati
Nov. 24 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 29 LOUISVILLE

SYRACUSE
Sept. 1 NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 8 vs. USC (East Rutherford, N.J.)
Sept. 15 STONY BROOK
Sept. 22 at Minnesota
Oct. 5 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 13 at Rutgers
Oct. 19 CONNECTICUT
Oct. 27 at South Florida
Nov. 3 at Cincinnati
Nov. 10 LOUISVILLE
Nov. 17 at Missouri
Nov. 23 at Temple

TEMPLE
Aug. 31 VILLANOVA
Sept. 8 MARYLAND
Sept. 22 at Penn State
Oct. 6 SOUTH FLORIDA
Oct. 13 at Connecticut
Oct. 20 RUTGERS
Oct. 27 at Pittsburgh
Nov. 3 at Louisville
Nov. 10 CINCINNATI
Nov. 17 at Army
Nov. 23 SYRACUSE

SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 1 CHATTANOOGA
Sept. 8 at Nevada
Sept. 13 RUTGERS
Sept. 22 at Ball State
Sept. 29 FLORIDA STATE
Oct. 6 at Temple
Oct. 20 at Louisville
Oct. 27 SYRACUSE
Nov. 3 CONNECTICUT
Nov. 17 at Miami
Nov. 23 at Cincinnati
Dec. 1 PITTSBURGH

BIG TEN

ILLINOIS
Sept. 1 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 8 at Arizona State
Sept. 15 CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Sept. 22 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 29 PENN STATE
Oct. 6 at Wisconsin
Oct. 13 at Michigan
Oct. 27 INDIANA
Nov. 3 at Ohio State
Nov. 10 MINNESOTA
Nov. 17 PURDUE
Nov. 24 at Northwestern

INDIANA
Sept. 1 INDIANA STATE
Sept. 8 vs. Massachusetts (Boston)
Sept. 15 BALL STATE
Sept. 29 at Northwestern
Oct. 6 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 13 OHIO STATE
Oct. 20 at Navy
Oct. 27 at Illinois
Nov. 3 IOWA
Nov. 10 WISCONSIN
Nov. 17 at Penn State
Nov. 24 at Purdue

IOWA
Sept. 1 vs. Northern Illinois (Chicago)
Sept. 8 IOWA STATE
Sept. 15 NORTHERN IOWA
Sept. 22 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Sept. 29 MINNESOTA
Oct. 13 at Michigan State
Oct. 20 PENN STATE
Oct. 27 at Northwestern
Nov. 3 at Indiana
Nov. 10 PURDUE
Nov. 17 at Michigan
Nov. 23 NEBRASKA

MICHIGAN
Sep. 1 vs. Alabama (Arlington, TX)
Sep. 8 AIR FORCE
Sep. 15 MASSACHUSETTS
Sep. 22 at Notre Dame
Oct. 6 at Purdue
Oct. 13 ILLINOIS
Oct. 20 MICHIGAN STATE
Oct. 27 at Nebraska
Nov. 3 at Minnesota
Nov. 10 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 17 IOWA
Nov. 24 at Ohio State

MICHIGAN STATE
Aug. 31 BOISE STATE
Sept. 8 at Central Michigan
Sept. 15 NOTRE DAME
Sept. 22 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 29 OHIO STATE
Oct. 6 at Indiana
Oct. 13 IOWA
Oct. 20 at Michigan
Oct. 27 at Wisconsin
Nov. 3 NEBRASKA
Nov. 17 NORTHWESTERN
Nov. 24 at Minnesota

MINNESOTA
Aug. 30 at UNLV
Sept. 8 NEW HAMPSHIRE
Sept. 15 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 22 SYRACUSE
Sept. 29 at Iowa
Oct. 13 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 20 at Wisconsin
Oct. 27 PURDUE
Nov. 3 MICHIGAN
Nov. 10 at Illinois
Nov. 17 at Nebraska
Nov. 24 MICHIGAN STATE

NEBRASKA
Sept. 1 SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 8 at UCLA
Sept. 15 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 22 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 29 WISCONSIN
Oct 6 at Ohio State
Oct 20 at Northwestern
Oct 27 MICHIGAN
Nov 3 at Michigan State
Nov 10 PENN STATE
Nov 17 MINNESOTA
Nov 23 at Iowa

NORTHWESTERN
Sept. 1 at Syracuse
Sept. 8 VANDERBILT
Sept. 15 BOSTON COLLEGE
Sept. 22 SOUTH DAKOTA
Sept. 29 INDIANA
Oct. 6 at Penn State
Oct. 13 at Minnesota
Oct. 20 NEBRASKA
Oct. 27 IOWA
Nov. 10 at Michigan
Nov. 17 at Michigan State
Nov. 24 ILLINOIS

OHIO STATE
Sept. 1 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 8 UCF
Sept. 15 CALIFORNIA
Sept. 22 UAB
Sept. 29 at Michigan State
Oct 6 NEBRASKA
Oct 13 at Indiana
Oct 20 PURDUE
Oct 27 at Penn State
Nov 3 ILLINOIS
Nov 17 at Wisconsin
Nov 24 MICHIGAN

PENN STATE
Sept. 1 OHIO
Sept. 8 at Virginia
Sept. 15 NAVY
Sept. 22 TEMPLE
Sept. 29 at Illinois
Oct. 6 NORTHWESTERN
Oct. 20 at Iowa
Oct. 27 OHIO STATE
Nov. 3 at Purdue
Nov. 10 at Nebraska
Nov. 17 INDIANA
Nov. 24 WISCONSIN

PURDUE
Sept. 1 EASTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 8 at Notre Dame
Sept. 15 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 29 MARSHALL
Oct. 6 MICHIGAN
Oct. 13 WISCONSIN
Oct. 20 at Ohio State
Oct. 27 at Minnesota
Nov. 3 PENN STATE
Nov. 10 at Iowa
Nov. 17 at Illinois
Nov. 24 INDIANA

WISCONSIN
Sept. 1 NORTHERN IOWA
Sept. 8 at Oregon State
Sept. 15 UTAH STATE
Sept. 22 UTEP
Sept. 29 at Nebraska
Oct. 6 ILLINOIS
Oct. 13 at Purdue
Oct. 20 MINNESOTA
Oct. 27 MICHIGAN STATE
Nov. 10 at Indiana
Nov. 17 OHIO STATE
Nov. 24 at Penn State

BIG 12

BAYLOR
Sept. 1 SMU
Sept. 15 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Sept. 22 at ULM
Sept. 29 at West Virginia
Oct. 13 TCU
Oct. 20 at Texas
Oct. 27 at Iowa State
Nov. 3 KANSAS
Nov. 10 at Oklahoma
Nov. 17 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 24 vs. Texas Tech (Arlington, TX)
Dec. 1 OKLAHOMA STATE

IOWA STATE
Sept. 1 TULSA
Sept. 8 at Iowa
Sept. 15 WESTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 29 TEXAS TECH
Oct 6 at TCU
Oct 13 KANSAS STATE
Oct 20 at Oklahoma State
Oct 27 BAYLOR
Nov 3 OKLAHOMA
Nov 10 at Texas
Nov 17 at Kansas
Nov 24 WEST VIRGINIA

KANSAS
Sept. 1 SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
Sept. 8 RICE
Sept. 15 TCU
Sept. 22 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 6 at Kansas State
Oct. 13 OKLAHOMA STATE
Oct. 20 at Oklahoma
Oct. 27 TEXAS
Nov. 3 at Baylor
Nov. 10 at Texas Tech
Nov. 17 IOWA STATE
Dec. 1 at West Virginia

KANSAS STATE
Sept. 1 MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 8 MIAMI
Sept. 15 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 22 at Oklahoma
Oct. 6 KANSAS
Oct. 13 at Iowa State
Oct. 20 at West Virginia
Oct. 27 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 3 OKLAHOMA STATE
Nov. 10 at TCU
Nov. 17 at Baylor
Dec. 1 TEXAS

OKLAHOMA
Sept. 1 at UTEP
Sept. 8 FLORIDA A&M
Sept. 22 KANSAS STATE
Oct. 6 at Texas Tech
Oct. 13 vs. Texas (Dallas)
Oct. 20 KANSAS
Oct. 27 NOTRE DAME
Nov. 3 at Iowa State
Nov. 10 BAYLOR
Nov. 17 at West Virginia
Nov. 24 OKLAHOMA STATE
Dec. 1 at TCU

OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 1 SAVANNAH STATE
Sept. 8 at Arizona
Sept. 15 LOUISIANA
Sept. 29 TEXAS
Oct. 13 at Kansas
Oct. 20 IOWA STATE
Oct. 27 TCU
Nov. 3 at Kansas State
Nov. 10 WEST VIRGINIA
Nov. 17 TEXAS TECH
Nov. 24 at Oklahoma
Dec. 1 at Baylor

TCU
Sept. 8 GRAMBLING STATE
Sept. 15 at Kansas
Sept. 22 VIRGINIA
Sept. 29 at SMU
Oct. 6 IOWA STATE
Oct. 13 at Baylor
Oct. 20 TEXAS TECH
Oct. 27 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 3 at West Virginia
Nov. 10 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 24 at Texas
Dec. 1 OKLAHOMA

TEXAS
Sept. 1 WYOMING
Sept. 8 NEW MEXICO
Sept. 15 at Ole Miss
Sept. 29 at Oklahoma State
Oct. 6 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 13 vs. Oklahoma (Dallas)
Oct. 20 BAYLOR
Oct. 27 at Kansas
Nov. 3 at Texas Tech
Nov. 10 IOWA STATE
Nov. 24 TCU
Dec. 1 at Kansas State

Wrangler

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

TEXAS TECH
Sept. 1 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 8 at Texas State
Sept. 15 NEW MEXICO
Sept. 29 at Iowa State
Oct. 6 OKLAHOMA
Oct. 13 WEST VIRGINIA
Oct. 20 at TCU
Oct. 27 at Kansas State
Nov. 3 TEXAS
Nov. 10 KANSAS
Nov. 17 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 24 vs. Baylor (Arlington, TX)

WEST VIRGINIA
Sept. 1 MARSHALL
Sept. 15 James Madison
Sept. 22 MARYLAND
Sept. 29 BAYLOR
Oct. 6 at Texas
Oct. 13 at Texas Tech
Oct. 20 KANSAS STATE
Nov. 3 TCU
Nov. 10 at Oklahoma State
Nov. 17 OKLAHOMA
Nov. 24 at Iowa State
Dec. 1 KANSAS

C-USA

EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 1 APPALACHIAN STATE
Sept. 8 at South Carolina
Sept. 15 at Southern Miss
Sept. 22 at North Carolina
Sept. 29 UTEP
Oct. 6 at UCF
Oct. 13 MEMPHIS
Oct. 20 at UAB
Oct. 27 NAVY
Nov. 3 HOUSTON
Nov. 17 at Tulane
Nov. 24 MARSHALL

HOUSTON
Sept. 1 TEXAS STATE
Sept. 8 LOUISIANA TECH
Sept. 15 at UCLA
Sept. 29 vs. Rice (Reliant Stadium)
Oct. 6 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 13 UAB
Oct. 20 at SMU
Oct. 27 UTEP
Nov. 3 at East Carolina
Nov. 10 TULSA
Nov. 17 at Marshall
Nov. 24 TULANE

MARSHALL
Sept. 1 at West Virginia
Sept. 8 WESTERN CAROLINA
Sept. 15 OHIO
Sept. 22 at Rice
Sept. 29 at Purdue
Oct. 6 TULSA
Oct. 20 at Southern Miss
Oct. 27 UCF
Nov. 3 MEMPHIS
Nov. 10 at UAB
Nov. 17 HOUSTON
Nov. 24 at East Carolina

MEMPHIS
Sept. 1 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Sept. 8 at Arkansas State
Sept. 15 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Sept. 22 at Duke
Oct. 6 RICE
Oct. 13 at East Carolina
Oct. 20 UCF
Oct. 27 at SMU
Nov. 3 at Marshall
Nov. 10 TULANE
Nov. 17 at UAB
Nov. 24 SOUTHERN MISS

RICE
Sept. 1 UCLA
Sept. 8 at Kansas
Sept. 15 at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 22 MARSHALL
Sept. 29 vs. Houston (Reliant Stadium)
Oct. 6 at Memphis
Oct. 13 UTSA
Oct. 20 at Tulsa
Oct. 27 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 3 at Tulane
Nov. 17 SMU
Nov. 24 at UTEP

SMU
Sept. 1 at Baylor
Sept. 8 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 15 TEXAS A&M
Sept. 29 TCU
Oct. 6 at UTEP
Oct. 13 at Tulane
Oct. 20 HOUSTON
Oct. 27 MEMPHIS
Nov. 3 at UCF
Nov. 10 SOUTHERN MISS
Nov. 17 at Rice
Nov. 24 TULSA

SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 1 at Nebraska
Sept. 15 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 22 at Western Kentucky
Sept. 29 LOUISVILLE
Oct. 6 BOISE STATE
Oct. 13 at UCF
Oct. 20 MARSHALL
Oct. 27 at Rice
Nov. 3 UAB
Nov. 10 at SMU
Nov. 17 UTEP
Nov. 24 at Memphis

TULANE
Sept. 1 RUTGERS
Sept. 8 at Tulsa
Sept. 22 OLE MISS
Sept. 29 ULM
Oct. 6 at Louisiana
Oct. 13 SMU
Oct. 20 at UTEP
Oct. 27 UAB
Nov. 3 RICE
Nov. 10 at Memphis
Nov. 17 EAST CAROLINA
Nov. 24 at Houston

TULSA
Sept. 1 at Iowa State
Sept. 8 TULANE
Sept. 15 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 22 FRESNO STATE
Sept. 29 at UAB
Oct. 6 at Marshall
Oct. 13 UTEP
Oct. 20 RICE
Nov. 3 at Arkansas
Nov. 10 at Houston
Nov. 17 UCF
Nov. 24 at SMU

UAB
Sept. 1 TROY
Sept. 15 at South Carolina
Sept. 22 at Ohio State
Sept. 29 TULSA
Oct. 6 S.E. LOUISIANA
Oct. 13 at Houston
Oct. 20 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 27 at Tulane
Nov. 3 at Southern Miss
Nov. 10 MARSHALL
Nov. 17 MEMPHIS
Nov. 24 at UCF

UCF
Aug. 30 at Akron
Sept. 8 at Ohio State
Sept. 15 FIU
Sept. 29 MISSOURI
Oct. 6 EAST CAROLINA
Oct. 13 SOUTHERN MISS
Oct. 20 at Memphis
Oct. 27 at Marshall
Nov. 3 SMU
Nov. 10 at UTEP
Nov. 17 at Tulsa
Nov. 24 UAB

UTEP
Sept. 1 OKLAHOMA
Sept. 8 at Ole Miss
Sept. 15 NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 22 at Wisconsin
Sept. 29 at East Carolina
Oct. 6 SMU
Oct. 13 at Tulsa
Oct. 20 TULANE
Oct. 27 at Houston
Nov. 10 UCF
Nov. 17 at Southern Miss
Nov. 24 RICE

I-A INDEPENDENTS

ARMY
Sept. 8 at San Diego State
Sept. 15 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 22 at Wake Forest
Sept. 29 STONY BROOK
Oct. 6 BOSTON COLLEGE
Oct. 13 KENT STATE
Oct. 20 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 27 BALL STATE
Nov. 3 AIR FORCE
Nov. 10 at Rutgers
Nov. 17 TEMPLE
Dec. 8 vs. Navy (Philadelphia, PA)

BYU
Sept. 1 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 8 WEBER STATE
Sept. 15 at Utah
Sept. 22 at Boise State
Sept. 29 HAWAII
Oct. 5 UTAH STATE
Oct. 13 OREGON STATE
Oct. 20 at Notre Dame
Oct. 27 at Georgia Tech
Nov. 10 IDAHO
Nov. 17 at San Jose State
Nov. 24 at New Mexico State

NAVY
Sept. 1 vs. Notre Dame (Dublin, Ireland)
Sept. 15 at Penn State
Sept. 22 VMI
Sept. 29 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 6 at Air Force
Oct. 13 at Central Michigan
Oct. 20 INDIANA
Oct. 27 at East Carolina
Nov. 3 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
Nov. 10 at Troy
Nov. 17 TEXAS STATE
Dec. 8 vs. Army (Philadelphia, PA)

NOTRE DAME
Sept. 1 vs. Navy (Dublin, Ireland)
Sept. 8 PURDUE
Sept. 15 at Michigan State
Sept. 22 MICHIGAN
Oct. 6 vs. Miami (Chicago)
Oct. 13 STANFORD
Oct. 20 BYU
Oct. 27 at Oklahoma
Nov. 3 PITTSBURGH
Nov. 10 at Boston College
Nov. 17 WAKE FOREST
Nov. 24 at USC

MAC

AKRON
Aug. 30 UCF
Sept. 8 at FIU
Sept. 15 MORGAN STATE
Sept. 22 at Tennessee
Sept. 29 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 6 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 13 at Ohio
Oct. 20 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 27 at Central Michigan
Nov. 3 at Kent State
Nov. 10 MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 20 at Toledo

BALL STATE
Aug. 30 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 8 at Clemson
Sept. 15 at Indiana
Sept. 22 SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 29 at Kent State
Oct. 6 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 13 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 20 at Central Michigan
Oct. 27 at Army
Nov. 6 at Toledo
Nov. 14 OHIO
Nov. 23 at Miami (OH)

BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 1 at Florida
Sept. 8 IDAHO
Sept. 15 at Toledo
Sept. 22 at Virginia Tech
Sept. 29 RHODE ISLAND
Oct. 6 at Akron
Oct. 13 MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 20 at Massachusetts
Oct. 27 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 7 at Ohio
Nov. 17 KENT STATE
Nov. 23 vs. Buffalo (Columbus, OH)

BUFFALO
Sept. 1 at Georgia
Sept. 8 MORGAN STATE
Sept. 19/20 KENT STATE
Sept. 29 at Connecticut
Oct. 6 at Ohio
Oct. 13 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 20 PITTSBURGH
Oct. 27 TOLEDO
Nov. 3 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 10 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 17 at Massachusetts
Nov. 23 vs. Bowling Green (Columbus, OH)

CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Aug. 30 SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 8 MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 22 at Iowa
Sept. 29 at Northern Illinois
Oct. 6 at Toledo
Oct. 13 NAVY
Oct. 20 BALL STATE
Oct. 27 AKRON
Nov. 3 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 10 at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 17 MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 23 at Massachusetts

EASTERN MICHIGAN
Aug. 30 at Ball State
Sept. 8 ILLINOIS STATE
Sept. 15 at Purdue
Sept. 22 at Michigan State
Oct. 6 KENT STATE
Oct. 13 TOLEDO
Oct. 20 ARMY
Oct. 27 at Bowling Green
Nov. 1 at Ohio
Nov. 10 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 17 at Western Michigan
Nov. 23 NORTHERN ILLINOIS

KENT STATE
Aug. 30 Towson
Sept. 8 at Kentucky
Sept. 19/20 at Buffalo
Sept. 29 BALL STATE
Oct. 6 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 13 at Army
Oct. 20 WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 27 at Rutgers
Nov. 3 AKRON
Nov. 10 at Miami (OH)
Nov. 17 at Bowling Green
Nov. 23 OHIO

MASSACHUSETTS
Aug. 30 at Connecticut
Sept. 8 vs. Indiana (Boston)
Sept. 15 at Michigan
Sept. 22 at Miami (OH)
Sept. 29 OHIO
Oct. 6 at Western Michigan
Oct. 20 BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 27 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 3 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 10 at Akron
Nov. 17 BUFFALO
Nov. 23 CENTRAL MICHIGAN

MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 1 at Ohio State
Sept. 8 SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 15 at Boise State
Sept. 22 MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 29 at Akron
Oct. 6 at Cincinnati
Oct. 13 at Bowling Green
Oct. 27 OHIO
Nov. 3 at Buffalo
Nov. 10 KENT STATE
Nov. 17 at Central Michigan
Nov. 23 BALL STATE

NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 1 vs. Iowa (Chicago)
Sept. 8 TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Sept. 15 at Army
Sept. 22 KANSAS
Sept. 29 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 6 at Ball State
Oct. 13 BUFFALO
Oct. 20 at Akron
Oct. 27 at Western Michigan
Nov. 3 MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 14 TOLEDO
Nov. 23 at Eastern Michigan

OHIO
Sept. 1 at Penn State
Sept. 8 NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 15 at Marshall
Sept. 22 NORFOLK STATE
Sept. 29 at Massachusetts
Oct. 6 BUFFALO
Oct. 13 AKRON
Oct. 27 at Miami (OH)
Nov. 1 EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 7 BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 14 at Ball State
Nov. 23 at Kent State

TOLEDO
Sept. 1 at Arizona
Sept. 8 at Wyoming
Sept. 15 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 22 COASTAL CAROLINA
Sept. 29 at Western Michigan
Oct. 6 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 13 at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 20 CINCINNATI
Oct. 27 at Buffalo
Nov. 6 BALL STATE
Nov. 14 at Northern Illinois
Nov. 20 AKRON

WESTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 1 at Illinois
Sept. 8 EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 15 at Minnesota
Sept. 22 CONNECTICUT
Sept. 29 TOLEDO
Oct. 6 MASSACHUSETTS
Oct. 13 at Ball State
Oct. 20 at Kent State
Oct. 27 NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 3 at Central Michigan
Nov. 10 at Buffalo
Nov. 17 EASTERN MICHIGAN

MOUNTAIN WEST

AIR FORCE
Sept. 1 IDAHO STATE
Sept. 8 at Michigan
Sept. 22 at UNLV
Sept. 29 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 6 NAVY
Oct. 13 at Wyoming
Oct. 20 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 27 NEVADA
Nov. 3 at Army
Nov. 10 at San Diego State
Nov. 17 HAWAII
Nov. 24 at Fresno State

BOISE STATE
Aug. 31 at Michigan State
Sept. 15 MIAMI (OH)
Sept. 22 BYU
Sept. 29 at New Mexico
Oct. 6 at Southern Miss
Oct. 13 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 20 UNLV
Oct. 27 at Wyoming
Nov. 3 SAN DIEGO STATE
Nov. 10 at Hawaii
Nov. 17 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 24 at Nevada

COLORADO STATE
Sept. 2 vs. Colorado (Denver)
Sept. 8 NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Sept. 15 at San Jose State
Sept. 22 UTAH STATE
Sept. 29 at Air Force
Oct. 6 FRESNO STATE
Oct. 13 at San Diego State
Oct. 27 HAWAII
Nov. 3 at Wyoming
Nov. 10 UNLV
Nov. 17 at Boise State
Nov. 24 NEW MEXICO

FRESNO STATE
Sept. 1 WEBER STATE
Sept. 8 at Oregon
Sept. 15 COLORADO
Sept. 22 at Tulsa
Sept. 29 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 6 at Colorado State
Oct. 13 at Boise State
Oct. 20 WYOMING
Oct. 27 at New Mexico
Nov. 3 HAWAII
Nov. 10 at Nevada
Nov. 24 AIR FORCE

HAWAII
Sept. 1 at USC
Sept. 15 LAMAR
Sept. 22 NEVADA
Sept. 29 at BYU
Oct. 6 at San Diego State
Oct. 13 NEW MEXICO
Oct. 27 at Colorado State
Nov. 3 at Fresno State
Nov. 10 BOISE STATE
Nov. 17 at Air Force
Nov. 24 UNLV
Dec. 1 SOUTH ALABAMA

NEVADA
Sept. 1 at California
Sept. 8 SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 15 NORTHWESTERN STATE
Sept. 22 at Hawaii
Sept. 29 at Texas State
Oct. 6 WYOMING
Oct. 13 at UNLV
Oct. 20 SAN DIEGO STATE
Oct. 27 at Air Force
Nov. 10 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 17 at New Mexico
Nov. 24 BOISE STATE

NEW MEXICO
Sept. 1 SOUTHERN
Sept. 8 at Texas
Sept. 15 at Texas Tech
Sept. 22 at New Mexico State
Sept. 29 BOISE STATE
Oct. 6 TEXAS STATE
Oct. 13 at Hawaii
Oct. 20 at Air Force
Oct. 27 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 3 at UNLV
Nov. 10 WYOMING
Nov. 17 NEVADA
Nov. 24 at Colorado State

SAN DIEGO STATE
Sept. 1 at Washington
Sept. 8 ARMY
Sept. 15 NORTH DAKOTA
Sept. 22 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 29 at Fresno State
Oct. 6 HAWAII
Oct. 13 COLORADO STATE
Oct. 20 at Nevada
Oct. 27 UNLV
Nov. 3 at Boise State
Nov. 10 AIR FORCE
Nov. 24 at Wyoming

UNLV
Aug. 30 MINNESOTA
Sept. 8 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 15 WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 22 AIR FORCE
Sept. 29 at Utah State
Oct. 6 at Louisiana Tech
Oct. 13 NEVADA
Oct. 20 at Boise State
Oct. 27 at San Diego State
Nov. 3 NEW MEXICO
Nov. 10 at Colorado State
Nov. 17 WYOMING
Nov. 24 at Hawaii

WYOMING
Sept. 1 at Texas
Sept. 8 TOLEDO
Sept. 15 CAL POLY
Sept. 22 at Idaho
Oct. 6 at Nevada
Oct. 13 AIR FORCE
Oct. 20 at Fresno State
Oct. 27 BOISE STATE
Nov. 3 COLORADO STATE
Nov. 10 at New Mexico
Nov. 17 at UNLV
Nov. 24 SAN DIEGO STATE

Wrangler

NATIONAL SCHEDULES

PAC-12

ARIZONA
Sept. 1 TOLEDO
Sept. 8 OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 15 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Sept. 22 at Oregon
Sept. 29 OREGON STATE
Oct. 6 at Stanford
Oct. 20 WASHINGTON
Oct. 27 USC
Nov. 3 at UCLA
Nov. 10 COLORADO
Nov. 17 at Utah
Nov. 23 ARIZONA STATE

ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 1 NORTHERN ARIZONA
Sept. 8 ILLINOIS
Sept. 15 at Missouri
Sept. 22 UTAH
Sept. 29 at California
Oct. 11 at Colorado
Oct. 18 OREGON
Oct. 27 UCLA
Nov. 3 at Oregon State
Nov. 10 at USC
Nov. 17 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 23 at Arizona

CALIFORNIA
Sept. 1 NEVADA
Sept. 8 SOUTHERN UTAH
Sept. 15 at Ohio State
Sept. 22 at USC
Sept. 29 ARIZONA STATE
Oct. 6 UCLA
Oct. 13 at Washington State
Oct. 20 STANFORD
Oct. 27 at Utah
Nov. 2 WASHINGTON
Nov. 10 OREGON
Nov. 17 at Oregon State

COLORADO
Sept. 2 vs. Colorado State (Denver)
Sept. 8 SACRAMENTO STATE
Sept. 15 at Fresno State
Sept. 22 at Washington State
Sept. 29 UCLA
Oct 11 ARIZONA STATE
Oct 20 at USC
Oct 27 at Oregon
Nov 3 STANFORD
Nov 10 at Arizona
Nov 17 WASHINGTON
Nov 23 UTAH

OREGON
Sept. 1 ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 8 FRESNO STATE
Sept. 15 TENNESSEE TECH
Sept. 22 ARIZONA
Sept. 29 vs. Washington St. (Seattle)
Oct 6 WASHINGTON
Oct 18 at Arizona State
Oct 27 COLORADO
Nov 3 at USC
Nov 10 at California
Nov 17 STANFORD
Nov 24 at Oregon State

OREGON STATE
Sept. 1 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 8 WISCONSIN
Sept. 22 at UCLA
Sept. 29 at Arizona
Oct. 6 WASHINGTON STATE
Oct. 13 at BYU
Oct. 20 UTAH
Oct. 27 at Washington
Nov. 3 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 10 at Stanford
Nov. 17 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 24 OREGON

STANFORD
Sept. 1 SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 8 DUKE
Sept. 15 USC
Sept. 27 at Washington
Oct. 6 ARIZONA
Oct. 13 at Notre Dame
Oct. 20 at California
Oct. 27 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 3 at Colorado
Nov. 10 OREGON STATE
Nov. 17 at Oregon
Nov. 24 at UCLA

UCLA
Sept. 1 at Rice
Sept. 8 NEBRASKA
Sept. 15 HOUSTON
Sept. 22 OREGON STATE
Sept. 29 at Colorado
Oct. 6 at California
Oct. 13 UTAH
Oct. 27 at Arizona State
Nov. 3 ARIZONA
Nov. 10 at Washington State
Nov. 17 USC
Nov. 24 STANFORD

USC
Sept. 1 HAWAII
Sept. 8 vs. Syracuse (East Rutherford, N.J.)
Sept. 15 at Stanford
Sept. 22 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 4 at Utah
Oct. 13 at Washington
Oct. 20 COLORADO
Oct. 27 at Arizona
Nov. 3 OREGON
Nov. 10 ARIZONA STATE
Nov. 17 at UCLA
Nov. 24 NOTRE DAME

UTAH
Aug. 30 NORTHERN COLORADO
Sept. 7 at Utah State
Sept. 15 BYU
Sept. 22 at Arizona State
Oct. 4 USC
Oct. 13 at UCLA
Oct. 20 at Oregon State
Oct. 27 CALIFORNIA
Nov. 3 WASHINGTON STATE
Nov. 10 at Washington
Nov. 17 ARIZONA
Nov. 23 at Colorado

WASHINGTON
Sept. 1 SAN DIEGO STATE
Sept. 8 at LSU
Sept. 15 PORTLAND STATE
Sept. 27 STANFORD
Oct. 6 at Oregon
Oct. 13 USC
Oct. 20 at Arizona
Oct. 27 OREGON STATE
Nov. 2 at California
Nov. 10 UTAH
Nov. 17 at Colorado
Nov. 23 at Washington State

WASHINGTON STATE
Sept. 1 at BYU
Sept. 8 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 15 at UNLV
Sept. 22 COLORADO
Sept. 29 vs. Oregon (Seattle)
Oct. 6 at Oregon State
Oct. 13 CALIFORNIA
Oct. 27 at Stanford
Nov. 3 at Utah
Nov. 10 UCLA
Nov. 17 at Arizona State
Nov. 23 WASHINGTON

SEC

ALABAMA
Sept. 1 vs. Michigan (Arlington, TX)
Sept. 8 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 15 at Arkansas
Sept. 22 FAU
Sept. 29 OLE MISS
Oct. 13 at Missouri
Oct. 20 at Tennessee
Oct. 27 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 3 at LSU
Nov. 10 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 17 WESTERN CAROLINA
Nov. 24 AUBURN

ARKANSAS
Sept. 1 JACKSONVILLE STATE
Sept. 8 ULM
Sept. 15 ALABAMA
Sept. 22 RUTGERS
Sept. 29 at Texas A&M
Oct. 6 at Auburn
Oct. 13 KENTUCKY
Oct. 27 OLE MISS
Nov. 3 TULSA
Nov. 10 at South Carolina
Nov. 17 at Mississippi State
Nov. 24 LSU

AUBURN
Sept. 1 vs. Clemson (Atlanta, GA)
Sept. 8 at Mississippi State
Sept. 15 ULM
Sept. 22 LSU
Oct. 6 ARKANSAS
Oct. 13 at Ole Miss
Oct. 20 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 27 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 3 NEW MEXICO STATE
Nov. 10 GEORGIA
Nov. 17 ALABAMA A&M
Nov. 24 at Alabama

FLORIDA
Sept. 1 BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 8 at Texas A&M
Sept. 15 at Tennessee
Sept. 22 KENTUCKY
Oct. 6 LSU
Oct. 13 at Vanderbilt
Oct. 20 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 27 vs.Georgia (Jacksonville)
Nov. 3 MISSOURI
Nov. 10 LOUISIANA
Nov. 17 JACKSONVILLE STATE
Nov. 24 at Florida State

GEORGIA
Sept. 1 BUFFALO
Sept. 8 at Missouri
Sept. 15 FAU
Sept. 22 VANDERBILT
Sept. 29 TENNESSEE
Oct. 6 at South Carolina
Oct. 20 at Kentucky
Oct. 27 vs. Florida (Jacksonville)
Nov. 3 OLE MISS
Nov. 10 at Auburn
Nov. 17 GEORGIA SOUTHERN
Nov. 24 GEORGIA TECH

KENTUCKY
Sept. 2 at Louisville
Sept. 8 KENT STATE
Sept. 15 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 22 at Florida
Sept. 29 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 6 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Oct. 13 at Arkansas
Oct. 20 GEORGIA
Oct. 27 at Missouri
Nov. 3 VANDERBILT
Nov. 17 SAMFORD
Nov. 24 at Tennessee

LSU
Sept. 1 NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 8 WASHINGTON
Sept. 15 IDAHO
Sept. 22 at Auburn
Sept. 29 TOWSON
Oct. 6 at Florida
Oct. 13 SOUTH CAROLINA
Oct. 20 at Texas A&M
Nov. 3 ALABAMA
Nov. 10 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Nov. 17 OLE MISS
Nov. 24 at Arkansas

OLE MISS
Sept. 1 CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Sept. 8 UTEP
Sept. 15 TEXAS
Sept. 22 at Tulane
Sept. 29 at Alabama
Oct. 6 TEXAS A&M
Oct. 13 AUBURN
Oct. 27 at Arkansas
Nov. 3 at Georgia
Nov. 10 VANDERBILT
Nov. 17 at LSU
Nov. 24 MISSISSIPPI STATE

MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 1 JACKSON STATE
Sept. 8 AUBURN
Sept. 15 at Troy
Sept. 22 SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 6 at Kentucky
Oct. 13 TENNESSEE
Oct. 20 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 27 at Alabama
Nov. 3 TEXAS A&M
Nov. 10 at LSU
Nov. 17 ARKANSAS
Nov. 24 at Ole Miss

MISSOURI
Sept. 1 S.E. LOUISIANA
Sept. 8 GEORGIA
Sept. 15 ARIZONA STATE
Sept. 22 at South Carolina
Sept. 29 at UCF
Oct. 6 VANDERBILT
Oct. 13 ALABAMA
Oct. 27 KENTUCKY
Nov. 3 at Florida
Nov. 10 at Tennessee
Nov. 17 SYRACUSE
Nov. 24 at Texas A&M

SOUTH CAROLINA
Aug. 30 at Vanderbilt
Sept. 8 EAST CAROLINA
Sept. 15 UAB
Sept. 22 MISSOURI
Sept. 29 at Kentucky
Oct. 6 GEORGIA
Oct. 13 at LSU
Oct. 20 at Florida
Oct. 27 TENNESSEE
Nov. 10 ARKANSAS
Nov. 17 WOFFORD
Nov. 24 at Clemson

TENNESSEE
Aug. 31 vs. NC State (Atlanta)
Sept. 8 GEORGIA STATE
Sept. 15 FLORIDA
Sept. 22 AKRON
Sept. 29 at Georgia
Oct. 13 at Mississippi State
Oct. 20 ALABAMA
Oct. 27 at South Carolina
Nov. 3 TROY
Nov. 10 MISSOURI
Nov. 17 at Vanderbilt
Nov. 24 KENTUCKY

TEXAS A&M
Aug. 30 at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 8 FLORIDA
Sept. 15 at SMU
Sept. 22 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Sept. 29 ARKANSAS
Oct. 6 at Ole Miss
Oct. 20 LSU
Oct. 27 at Auburn
Nov. 3 at Mississippi State
Nov. 10 at Alabama
Nov. 17 SAM HOUSTON STATE
Nov. 24 MISSOURI

VANDERBILT
Aug. 30 SOUTH CAROLINA
Sept. 8 at Northwestern
Sept. 15 PRESBYTERIAN
Sept. 22 at Georgia
Oct. 6 at Missouri
Oct. 13 FLORIDA
Oct. 20 AUBURN
Oct. 27 MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 3 at Kentucky
Nov. 10 at Ole Miss
Nov. 17 TENNESSEE
Nov. 24 at Wake Forest

SUN BELT

ARKANSAS STATE
Sept. 1 at Oregon
Sept. 8 MEMPHIS
Sept. 15 at Nebraska
Sept. 22 ALCORN STATE
Sept. 29 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 4 at FIU
Oct. 13 SOUTH ALABAMA
Oct. 23 at Louisiana
Nov. 3 at North Texas
Nov. 8 ULM
Nov. 17 at Troy
Dec 1 MIDDLE TENNESSEE

FAU
Aug. 31 WAGNER
Sept. 8 at Middle Tennessee
Sept. 15 at Georgia
Sept. 22 at Alabama
Sept. 29 NORTH TEXAS
Oct. 13 at ULM
Oct. 20 at South Alabama
Oct. 27 TROY
Nov. 3 at Navy
Nov. 10 at Western Kentucky
Nov. 16 FIU
Dec. 1 LOUISIANA

FIU
Sept. 1 at Duke
Sept. 8 AKRON
Sept. 15 at UCF
Sept. 22 LOUISVILLE
Sept. 29 at Louisiana
Oct. 4 ARKANSAS STATE
Oct. 13 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Oct. 20 at Troy
Oct. 27 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 3 at South Alabama
Nov. 16 at FAU
Nov. 24 ULM

LOUISIANA
Sept. 1 LAMAR
Sept. 8 at Troy
Sept. 15 at Oklahoma State
Sept. 29 FIU
Oct. 6 TULANE
Oct. 16 at North Texas
Oct. 23 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 3 at ULM
Nov. 10 at Florida
Nov. 17 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Nov. 24 SOUTH ALABAMA
Dec. 1 at FAU

MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Aug. 30 McNEESE STATE
Sept. 8 FAU
Sept. 15 at Memphis
Sept. 29 at Georgia Tech
Oct. 6 ULM
Oct. 13 at FIU
Oct. 20 at Mississippi State
Oct. 27 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 1 at Western Kentucky
Nov. 17 at South Alabama
Nov. 24 TROY
Dec 1 at Arkansas State

NORTH TEXAS
Sept. 1 at LSU
Sept. 8 TEXAS SOUTHERN
Sept. 15 at Kansas State
Sept. 22 TROY
Sept. 29 at FAU
Oct. 6 at Houston
Oct. 16 LOUISIANA
Oct. 27 at Middle Tennessee
Nov. 3 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 10 SOUTH ALABAMA
Nov. 17 at ULM
Nov. 24 at Western Kentucky

SOUTH ALABAMA
Aug. 30 UTSA
Sept. 8 NICHOLLS STATE
Sept. 15 at NC State
Sept. 22 at Mississippi State
Sept. 29 TROY
Oct. 13 at Arkansas State
Oct. 20 FAU
Oct. 27 at ULM
Nov. 3 FIU
Nov. 10 at North Texas
Nov. 17 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 24 at Louisiana
Dec. 1 at Hawaii

TROY
Sept. 1 at UAB
Sept. 8 LOUISIANA
Sept. 15 MISSISSIPPI STATE
Sept. 22 at North Texas
Sept. 29 at South Alabama
Oct. 11 WESTERN KENTUCKY
Oct. 20 FIU
Oct. 27 at FAU
Nov. 3 at Tennessee
Nov. 10 NAVY
Nov. 17 ARKANSAS STATE
Nov. 24 at Middle Tennessee

ULM
Sept. 8 at Arkansas
Sept. 15 at Auburn
Sept. 22 BAYLOR
Sept. 29 at Tulane
Oct. 6 at Middle Tennessee
Oct. 13 FAU
Oct. 20 at Western Kentucky
Oct. 27 SOUTH ALABAMA
Nov. 3 LOUISIANA
Nov. 8 at Arkansas State
Nov. 17 NORTH TEXAS
Nov. 24 at FIU

WESTERN KENTUCKY
Sept. 1 AUSTIN PEAY
Sept. 8 at Alabama
Sept. 15 at Kentucky
Sept. 22 SOUTHERN MISS
Sept. 29 at Arkansas State
Oct. 11 at Troy
Oct. 20 ULM
Oct. 27 at FIU
Nov. 1 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
Nov. 10 FAU
Nov. 17 at Louisiana
Nov. 24 NORTH TEXAS

WAC

IDAHO
Aug. 30 EASTERN WASHINGTON
Sept. 8 at Bowling Green
Sept. 15 at LSU
Sept. 22 WYOMING
Sept. 29 at North Carolina
Oct. 6 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 13 at Texas State
Oct. 20 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 3 SAN JOSE STATE
Nov. 10 at BYU
Nov. 17 UTSA
Nov. 24 at Utah State

LOUISIANA TECH
Aug. 30 TEXAS A&M
Sept. 8 at Houston
Sept. 15 RICE
Sept. 22 at Illinois
Sept. 29 at Virginia
Oct. 6 UNLV
Oct. 20 IDAHO
Oct. 27 at New Mexico State
Nov. 3 UTSA
Nov. 10 at Texas State
Nov. 17 UTAH STATE
Nov. 24 at San Jose State

NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 1 SOUTHERN
Sept. 8 at Texas
Sept. 15 at Texas Tech
Sept. 22 at New Mexico State
Sept. 29 BOISE STATE
Oct. 6 TEXAS STATE
Oct. 13 at Hawaii
Oct. 20 at Air Force
Oct. 27 FRESNO STATE
Nov. 3 at UNLV
Nov. 10 WYOMING
Nov. 17 NEVADA
Nov. 24 at Colorado State

SAN JOSE STATE
Sept. 1 at Stanford
Sept. 8 UC Davis
Sept. 15 COLORADO STATE
Sept. 22 at San Diego State
Sept. 29 at Navy
Oct. 13 UTAH STATE
Oct. 20 at UTSA
Oct. 27 TEXAS STATE
Nov. 3 at Idaho
Nov. 10 at New Mexico State
Nov. 17 BYU
Nov. 24 LOUISIANA TECH

TEXAS STATE
Sept. 1 at Houston
Sept. 8 TEXAS TECH
Sept. 22 STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
Sept. 29 NEVADA
Oct. 6 at New Mexico
Oct. 13 IDAHO
Oct. 27 at San Jose State
Nov. 3 at Utah State
Nov. 10 LOUISIANA TECH
Nov. 17 at Navy
Nov. 24 at UTSA
Dec. 1 NEW MEXICO STATE

UTAH STATE
Aug. 30 SOUTHERN UTAH
Sept. 7 UTAH
Sept. 15 at Wisconsin
Sept. 22 at Colorado State
Sept. 29 UNLV
Oct. 5 at BYU
Oct. 13 at San Jose State
Oct. 20 NEW MEXICO STATE
Oct. 27 at UTSA
Nov. 3 TEXAS STATE
Nov. 17 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 24 IDAHO

UTSA
Aug. 30 at South Alabama
Sept. 8 TEXAS A&M-COMMERCE
Sept. 15 at Georgia State
Sept. 22 N.W. OKLAHOMA STATE
Sept. 29 at New Mexico State
Oct. 13 at Rice
Oct. 20 SAN JOSE STATE
Oct. 27 UTAH STATE
Nov. 3 at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 10 McNEESE STATE
Nov. 17 at Idaho
Nov. 24 TEXAS STATE

KEEPING THE *faith*

BY BILL SORRELL

Landry Jones is a knee slapper.

When something tickles Jones' funny bone more than normal, he gets a high pitch and automatically slaps his knee.

"Landry is really old school in that sense," said Oklahoma punter Tress Way, who along with other teammates of the Oklahoma quarterback have had countless knee-slapping moments.

There will be more in 2012. Jones decided to stay in school for his senior year.

"I prayed about it for awhile and felt like God was telling me to come back. I really want to enjoy my senior year and my teammates. This is my last go-round and it's a little bit more urgent. There are goals I want to achieve," he said.

Among goals are winning the national championship, the Heisman Trophy and becoming the career leader in victories for an OU quarterback. He enters this season with 29 wins, three behind Steve Davis' record of 32 from 1973-75.

In 2011, Jones moved to first in career passing yards with 12,379, passing Heisman Trophy winners Jason White and Sam Bradford. With 93 career touchdown passes, he broke Bradford's school record. Jones finished sixth nationally last season in total offense, averaging 343.3 yards per game. In 2010, he won the Sammy Baugh Trophy as the nation's top college passer.

Photo by Matt Kartozian-US PRESSWIRE

LANDRY JONES

Despite the accolades, the quote Jones says most is that he is a Christian who happens to play football, not a football player who is a Christian.

Jones is the Sooners' spiritual leader. When middle linebacker Austin Box died accidentally in May 2011 at age 22 of pulmonary edema and aspiration pneumonia, Jones was in Haiti on a mission trip. At a memorial service, Jones spoke about how precious life is. He told teammates if they were unsure that Christ was in their life, they needed to talk with him and get it straight with God.

"Him doing that in front of the team meeting shows how big a factor Christ is in his life," said Way, who is also an evangelical Christian.

Through the influence of "great" parents Kevin and Kellye Jones, Landry made a profession of faith in Christ at age six. He was baptized at First Baptist Church in his hometown of Artesia, N.M.

He attends Antioch Community Church in Norman where pastor Chris Bennett has led him in discipleship. "He is the person that kind of sharpens my sword and works on things in my walk," said Jones.

One of Jones' favorite Bible verses is about a life rooted in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 reads "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness."

"I'm sure it sounds like a cliché, without Jesus I don't think I would have made it at OU," he said.

During the first part of college, he rebelled against God.

"I believed in Him, but I didn't follow Him. After the first year, I got to the point I was so sad and depressed. If life is not fun, it is not worth it. I was an angry young man."

Slowly he began to follow Christ, whom now is his life, he said. Jones changed his lifestyle. He changed the "girls situation" and the "drinking."

"I changed the way I was living. I was taking a stand. I understood deeper. I needed God in my life. The lifestyle I live (now) is a habit. I understand the deeper meaning of who Jesus is in my life. He is my source of happiness, a comfort in hard times and hope there is a better life.

"It's knowing that when everything is screwed up in your life, everything is going to be OK. Being an athlete that is huge; everything is based on your performance. Everyone judges on wins and losses. You persevere through hard times. With Jesus, there is a big picture of things. At the end of life, you are going to heaven and that is basically the only thing that matters."

Prior to the 2011 season, Jones became engaged to OU point guard Whitney Hand. They are planning to be married in July.

The way he treats his fiance sets him apart said Way, who has listened as Jones relates Christ to the church, whom the Bible says is His bride, and how God "is always pursuing us."

"We are looked at as a thing of beauty, just the way he talks about Whitney," said Way.

Hand has taught Jones, 23, about how to pursue her and encouraged him in the godly pursuit of other people.

"Being engaged, getting married, you realize how to put someone else above you and start being selfless and give your life away to someone else," said Jones.

While he is expected to be a first-round NFL draft choice in 2013, the ministry is also in his plans.

"I'm still trying to figure that out and what it is going to look like. I don't know if I'm going to be a pastor. I'm not sure what God has in store for me." He has also discussed church planting.

"You are to be bold about it and tell people about Him. God is real. If they don't respond, you pray for them. You never give up on people."

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes leadership team, Jones also leads a weekly Bible study for teammates. They recently studied Matthew.

It is Jones' work ethic and competitiveness that gives him an edge.

"On the field, Landry does a great job of reminding us that we are playing for the guy next to us," said Way.

Jones, who was named for Dallas Cowboys coaching legend Tom Landry (Jones is not a Cowboys fan), encourages players to spend time with Christ.

"The best advice he has given me in my walk with Christ is in order for a relationship to get stronger, you have to spend time with that person. That means spending more time with God and reading His word and in prayer," said Way, whose strong leg may land him in the NFL. Averaging 45.7 yards per punt last season, Way, an honorable mention All-Big 12 selection, had a school record 58 punts more than 50 yards each.

What Jones exhibits most, said Way, is joy and love.

"This may sound kind of cheesy, but it is love. He has the biggest heart of anybody I have ever met. It is not so much how many people he cares about, it is how much he cares about those people."

Jones would want people to say that he is a man who loves Jesus and follows Him, is a great leader, a great friend and is loyal.

During the 2011 mission trip to Haiti, Jones, along with the women's basketball team and members of the football team, worked in the Mission of Hope, an orphanage. He saw poverty first hand.

It made a big difference in his life. "You see the family of God in another light. You see how the body of Christ comes together. It gives you a heart for those people. You see how strong they are. You see how God was all they had and it was enough.

"When we choose God and not worldly things and do something for Him, it fills us with joy," said Jones, who plays the guitar and went sky diving three years ago. "Christianity is about how you live, about how you love people and the kind of choices you make."

Football is a gift said Jones and he plans to use it for Christ.

"How I use football is like the platform; the game plan of how to evangelize and show people who Jesus is."

NATIONAL RECRUITING

By Chris Nee
Rivals.com

1 Alabama

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 4, DT – 5, K – 1, LB – 5, OL – 3, QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 1, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: Alabama's class was led by a trio of five-star prospects in Geismar (La.) Dutchtown safety **Landon Collins**, Daphne (Ala.) running back **T.J. Yeldon**, and Panama City (Fla.) Arnold athlete **Eddie Williams**.

The Crimson Tide addressed needs at wide receiver by adding a trio of prospects from Florida. In addition to Williams, Jacksonville (Fla.) First Coast wide receiver **Chris Black** and Miami (Fla.) Northwestern wide receiver **Amari Cooper** also have the ability to contribute early.

On the defensive side of the ball, Alabama signed a strong group at linebacker with five four-star prospects in the group. Madison (Ala.) Bob Jones four-star inside linebacker **Reggie Ragland** is an imposing force at 6-4, 245 pounds. Daphne (Ala.) High four-star outside linebacker **Ryan Anderson** has the capability to come down to the defensive line, and be a difficult speed-rusher off the edge.

Alabama also addressed a need for depth and talent at defensive back by adding a pair from junior college in Thatcher (Ariz.) Eastern Arizona Junior College four-star cornerback **Travell Dixon** and Booneville (Miss.) Northeast Mississippi Community College three-star cornerback **Deion Belue**. Joining Collins from the high school ranks in the secondary will be Atlanta (Ga.) St. Pius X School four-star cornerback **Geno Smith**.

2 Texas

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 5, DB – 2, DE – 3, DT – 4, K – 1, LB – 5, OL – 4, QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: Texas once again competed for the recruiting national title with a strong group of 28 signees. The group was led by a pair of in-state five-star prospects in running back **Johnathan Gray** from Aledo and defensive tackle **Malcom Brown** from Brenham. Gray is an ultra-productive back with great size, while Brown is a thick, dominating force in the middle of the defensive line.

Mack Brown and company added several talented offensive linemen with Harker Heights (Texas) High four-star offensive tackle **Camrhon Hughes**, Pearland (Texas) Dawson four-star offensive tackle **Kennedy Estelle**, DeSoto (Texas) High four-star offensive guard **Curtis Riser** and Senatoba (Miss.) Northwest Mississippi Community College four-star offensive tackle **Donald Hawkins**.

They also addressed needs on the defensive line from both the high school and junior college ranks. Joining Brown from the high school ranks is Humble (Texas) four-star defensive tackle **Paul Boyette Jr.** and Dallas (Texas) Bishop Dunne three-star defensive tackle **Alex Norman**. Scooba (Miss.) East Mississippi Community College three-star defensive tackle **Brandon Moore** is a massive 6-6, 335-pound defensive tackle from the junior college ranks.

Two other prospects who could make an early impact at Texas are Austin (Texas) four-star wide receiver **Cayleb Jones** and Athens (Texas) four-star athlete **Kendall Sanders**.

3 Florida

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 4, DE – 5, DT – 3, K – 1, LB – 2, OL – 2, QB – 1, RB – 1, TE – 2, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: Will Muschamp and staff put together a very strong class in their first full year of recruiting for the Gators. The class is led by a pair of five-star defensive ends in Shelby (N.C.) Crest's **Jonathan Bullard** and St. Petersburg (Fla.) Lakewood's **Dante Fowler Jr.** The Gators also attained the services of five-star offensive tackle **D.J. Humphries** from Charlotte (N.C.) Mallard Creek. Another standout is Land O'Lakes (Fla.) High four-star tight end **Kent Taylor**, who was the top ranked tight end in the nation.

In total, Florida added five defensive ends. Joining Bullard and Fowler Jr. is a trio of three-star prospects in Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas' **Bryan Cox Jr.**, Clemmons (N.C.) West Forsyth's **Alex McCalister** and Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek's **Quinteze Williams**. The defensive tackle group was led by two big men in the middle in Scooba (Miss.) East Mississippi Community College four-star defensive tackle **Damien Jacobs** and Venice (Fla.) four-star defensive tackle **Dante Phillips**.

The Gators also added some top-end talent in the defensive secondary with a pair of in-state signees in Melbourne (Fla.) Holy Trinity four-star safety **Marcus Maye** and Bradenton (Fla.) Southeast four-star cornerback **Brian Poole**.

Joining Taylor at tight end is Warminster (Pa.) Archbishop Wood Catholic four-star tight end **Colin Thompson**, who is an elite blocking tight end.

Seffner (Fla.) Armwood four-star running back **Matt Jones** is a big back that is a very capable receiver out of the backfield.

Another skill position player who brings a lot of versatility to the Gators offensive attack will be Citra (Fla.) North Marion four-star wide receiver **Latroy Pittman**.

Boynton Beach (Fla.) offensive guard **Jessamen Dunker** joins Humphries as the only other offensive lineman signee in the class, but he will provide the Gators with a big and athletic offensive guard down the road.

4 Ohio State

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 1, DB – 4, DE – 3, DT – 1, LB – 4, OL – 5, QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: The Buckeyes finished as strong as anyone in the nation after the hiring of Urban Meyer. Their 25-man class is led by two five-star defensive ends — Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt's **Noah Spence** and Cincinnati (Ohio) Taft's **Adolphus Washington**.

Joining Spence and Washington at defensive end will be Canton (Ohio) McKinley four-star defensive end **Se'von Pittman**.

Playing beside that strong defensive end class will be Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West four-star defensive tackle **Tommy Schutt**.

Another defensive standout is West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial four-star inside linebacker **Camren Williams**, the top player from Massachusetts. He will be joined at linebacker by Galen (Ohio) Olentangy four-star outside linebacker **Josh Perry**.

The offensive class is headlined by Windsor (Colo.) four-star offensive tackle **Joey O'Connor**. Joining him in the trenches will be Vandalia (Ohio) Butler four-star offensive tackle **Taylor Decker**, Cleveland (Ohio) Heights four-star offensive tackle **Kyle Dodson**, Pickerington (Ohio) Central three-star offensive guard **Jacoby Boren**, and Pickerington (Ohio) North three-star offensive guard **Pat Elflein**.

Some offensive playmakers in the class include Columbus (Ohio) St. Francis DeSales four-star running back **Warren Ball**, Canton (Ohio) Glenoak four-star running back **Bri'onte Dunn**, South Bend (Ind.) Washington four-star athlete **David Perkins**, and Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy four-star wide receiver **Michael Thomas**.

5 Stanford

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 3, DE – 3, DT – 2, LB – 2, OL – 7, RB – 1, WR – 4

THE BUZZ: Nearly one-third of Stanford's signing class was along the offensive line, where they brought in seven prospects. The depth and quality of the group is impressive. Tempe (Ariz.) Corona Del Sol five-star offensive tackle **Andrus Peat** and San Clemente (Calif.) High five-star offensive tackle **Kyle Murphy** lead the group. Four of the other five signees along the offensive line are four-star prospects — Eden Prairie (Minn.) High offensive tackle **Nick Davidson**, Brentwood (Tenn.) Brentwod Academy offensive tackle **Graham Shuler**, Pleasant Grove (Utah) High offensive guard **Brandon Fanaika**, and Puyallup (Wash.) High offensive guard **Joshua Garnett**.

Another standout signee for the Cardinal is Atwater (Calif.) Buhach five-star defensive end **Aziz Shittu**. Honolulu (Hawaii) Punahou four-star defensive end **Luke Kaumatule** and College Park (Ga.) Woodward Academy four-star defensive tackle **Jordan Watkins** are another two to keep an eye on.

Ashburn (Va.) Briar Woods four-star safety **Alex Carter** and Leesburg (Fla.) High four-star outside linebacker **Noor Davis** can make an early contribution.

Top offensive skill position signees include Oklahoma City (Okla.) Heritage Hall four-star running back **Barry Sanders** and Los Angeles (Calif.) Loyola four-star wide receiver **Kodi Whitfield**.

6 Florida State

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 3, DE – 1, DT – 4, K – 2, LB – 2, OL – 2, QB – 2, RB – 1, TE – 1, WR –1

THE BUZZ: Florida State signed three five-star prospects, including a pair of defensive tackles. Hueytown (Ala.) dual-threat quarterback **Jameis Winston** can do damage with his arm and legs. Defensively, Denton (Texas) Ryan defensive tackle **Mario Edwards** and Washington (D.C.) Friendship Collegiate Academy defensive tackle **Eddie Goldman** are a strong duo in the middle.

The defensive line class is strong for the Seminoles with the likes of Prattville (Ala.) High four-star defensive tackle **Justin Shanks** and Mobile (Ala.)

Davidson four-star defensive end **Chris Casher** joining Edwards and Goldman.

The Seminoles are excited about Stone Mountain (Ga.) four-star linebacker **Ukeme Eligwe** and Jacksonville (Fla.) First Coast four-star linebacker **Reggie Northrup**.

The defensive back group is led by four-star cornerback **Ronald Darby** from Oxon Hill (Md.) Potomac and a pair of four-star safeties in Ocala (Fla.) Vanguard's **P.J. Williams** and San Antonio (Texas) Brandeis' **Colin Blake**.

Winston is coming in along with some good offensive talent. Cape Coral (Fla.) Island Coast four-star running back **Mario Pender** is a nice mix of speed and size. Orlando (Fla.) Boone four-star wide receiver **Marvin Bracy** has elite speed. Orange (Calif.) Lutheran four-star tight end **Christo Kourtzidis** is a capable blocker who is also a threat down the field in the passing game.

The offensive line group has a pair of junior college signees in Mission Viejo (Calif.) Saddleback Community College offensive tackle **Menelik Watson** and Roswell (N.M.) New Mexico Military Institute three-star offensive tackle **Daniel Glauser**.

7 Michigan

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 4, DE – 3, DT – 3, LB – 4, OL – 4, RB – 3, TE – 2, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: Brady Hoke and Michigan landed a special player in Kansas City (Mo.) Park Hill five-star defensive tackle **Ondre Pipkins**. Pipkins is massive at 6-3, 325 pounds and is surprisingly athletic when pursuing quarterbacks and ball carriers.

Another top signee is Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward five-star offensive tackle **Kyle Kalis**, considered the top prospect in Ohio for the 2012 class.

A couple of other talented offensive linemen taking their ability to the Wolverines are Carlsbad (Calif.) La Costa Canyon four-star offensive tackle **Erik Magnuson** and Nashville (Tenn.) Montgomery Bell Academy four-star offensive tackle **Blake Bars**.

Switching back to defense, Michigan landed a strong linebacker group led by four-star inside linebacker **Royce Jenkins-Stone** from Detroit (Mich.) Cass Tech and a pair of four-star outside linebackers in Orchard Lake (Mich.) St. Mary's **James Ross** and Cincinnati (Ohio) Colerain's **Joe Bolden**.

A pair of offensive skill players to keep an eye on are Detroit (Mich.) Martin Luther King four-star running back **Dennis Norfleet** and West Des Moines (Iowa) Dowling four-star wide receiver **Amara Darboh**. Norfleet is a versatile running back who is great at creating in space, while Darboh is a bigger target at wide receiver with excellent speed.

8 Southern California

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 3, DE – 3, LB – 2, OL – 3, RB – 1, TE – 1, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: USC signed just 15 prospects, but only two of them are ranked below four-star status. Low on quantity, but extremely high on quality.

All three five-star prospects in the class play on the offensive side of the ball. Tampa (Fla.) Berkeley Prep five-star wide receiver **Nelson Agholor** is a versatile offensive weapon who can make an instant impact. Lakewood (Wash.) Lakes five-star offensive tackle **Zach Banner** is massive at 6-9, 310 pounds, while Encino (Calif.) Crespi five-star offensive guard **Jordan Simmons** also has his fair share of bulk at 6-5, 333 pounds.

Joining Banner and Simmons up-front on the offensive line is Santa Margarita (Calif.) Catholic four-star offensive tackle **Max Tuerk**.

The Trojans didn't just dip into Florida for Agholor, they also got a very talented defensive end from the Sunshine State in Daytona Beach (Fla.) Mainland four-star **Leonard Williams**.

The defensive back haul was also very good as they landed Woodland Hills (Calif.) Pierce Community College four-star safety **Gerald Bowman**, the nation's top junior college player. Joining Bowman will be Inglewood (Calif.) High four-star cornerback **Devian Shelton** and Pasadena (Calif.) Muir four-star cornerback **Kevon Seymour**.

9 Miami

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 1, DB – 8, DE – 5, DT – 3, LB – 3, OL – 3, QB – 3, RB – 2, WR – 5

THE BUZZ: Miami signed the largest class in the nation with 33 prospects. The Hurricanes added much needed depth, especially at defensive back, along the defensive line, at quarterback and at wide receiver.

The top two prospects in Miami's class hail from right around the corner from the campus. Miami (Fla.) Norland five-star all-purpose back **Randy 'Duke' Johnson** was arguably the top high school player in the Sunshine State. Miramar (Fla.) five-star cornerback **Tracy Howard** was ranked the top college prospect from Florida in the 2012 class.

Joining Howard at the top of the class is Miami (Fla.) Columbus four-star safety **Deon Bush**.

Other top defensive signees include Tampa (Fla.) Jefferson four-star defensive end **Tyriq McCord**, Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) St. Thomas Aquinas four-star defensive end **Jelani Hamilton**, and Stone Mountain (Ga.) Stephenson four-star linebacker **Raphael Kirby**.

Offensive standouts include four-star wide receivers **Robert Lockhart** and **Malcolm Lewis**. Lockhart, from Fork Union (Va.) Fork Union Military Academy, has good size and runs precise routes. Lewis, who was teammates with Howard at Miramar (Fla.) High, is a quick wide receiver with sure hands.

Miami (Fla.) Norland four-star offensive tackle **Ereck Flowers** has a high ceiling as an edge blocker and could be an early contributor.

Wellington (Fla.) Palm Beach Central four-star athlete **Angelo Jean-Louis** could contribute on either side of the ball.

10 Auburn

THE PARTICULARS: DB – 3, DE – 1, DT – 1, LB – 2, OL – 7, QB – 2, RB – 1, TE – 2, WR – 2

THE BUZZ: Gene Chizik and Auburn signed a top 10 class on the shoulders of a strong offensive line group. Out of the seven signees on the offensive line, five of them are ranked as four-star prospects. The top offensive line signee for the Tigers was Palm Beach Gardens (Fla.) four-star offensive tackle **Avery Young**. Joining Young at the tackle spot is four-star **Shane Callahan** from Parker (Colo.) Chaparral, four-star **Patrick Miller** from West Palm Beach (Fla.) Dwyer, and four-star **Jordan Diamond** from Chicago (Ill.) Simeon. Castle Rock (Colo.) Valor Christian four-star offensive guard **Alex Kozan** also opted for Auburn.

Both wide receiver signees — Tyrone (Ga.) Sandy Creek four-star **JaQuay Williams** and Miami Beach (Fla.) four-star **Ricardo Louis** — offer good size and athleticism.

Four-star tight end **Ricky Parks** from Hogansville (Ga.) Callaway and four-star running back **Jovon Robinson** from Memphis (Tenn.) Wooddale are also solid offensive additions for the Tigers.

Fairburn (Ga.) Creekside cornerback **Joshua Holsey** was the top defensive signee for Auburn in 2012. He and Birmingham (Ala.) Woodlawn four-star outside linebacker **Cassanova McKinzy** have the potential to make an early contribution.

11 Oklahoma

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 2, DE – 3, LB – 1, OL – 4, QB – 1, RB – 3, TE – 4, WR – 5

THE BUZZ: The Sooners top signee was a prospect who they originally landed the services of in 2011 — five-star wide receiver **Trey Metoyer** — who had to go to prep school in order to qualify.

Metoyer leads a strong wide receiver group that also includes St. Louis (Mo.) DeSmet four-star wide receiver **Durron Neal**, Oklahoma City (Okla.) Heritage Hall four-star wide receiver **Sterling Shepard**, Inglewood (Calif.) High four-star wide receiver **Derrick Woods** and Roseville (Calif.) Sierra Community College four-star wide receiver **Courtney Gardner**.

The offensive class also included four-star quarterback **Trevon Knight** of San Antonio (Texas) Ronald Reagan, four-star running back **Alex Ross** of Jenks (Okla.), four-star tight end **Taylor McNamara** of San Diego (Calif.) Westview, and a pair of four-star offensive lineman in Santa Clarita (Calif.) College of the Canyons offensive tackle **Will Latu** and Apopka (Fla.) **Ty Darlington**.

The top defensive signee in the class was Seffner (Fla.) Armwood four-star outside linebacker **Eric Striker**. Overall, just six of the signees for the Sooners were on the defensive side of the ball.

12 Georgia

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DE – 4, DT – 2, K – 2, OL – 3, QB – 1, RB – 3, TE – 1, WR – 1

THE BUZZ: Georgia landed two five-star prospects in the 2012 class. Jacksonville (Fla.) Bolles five-star offensive tackle **John Theus** will join his brother, long snapper Nathan Theus, in Athens. The top prospect in the Peach State in 2012, Valdosta (Ga.) Lowndes five-star athlete **Josh Harvey-Clemons**, decided to play for the Bulldogs.

In total, 11 of the 19 signees come from the Peach State. Joining Harvey-Clemons at the top of that group is Hamilton (Ga.) Harris County four-star defen-

sive end **Jordan Jenkins**, Millen (Ga.) Jenkins County four-star defensive tackle **Jonathan Taylor**, Eastman (Ga.) Dodge County four-star defensive end **Leonard Floyd**, and Tucker (Ga.) four-star defensive end **Josh Dawson**.

After Theus, the top offensive prospects for Georgia are two running backs who both hail from North Carolina. Raleigh (N.C.) Millbrook four-star all-purpose back **Keith Marshall** is a talented runner with great speed, while Tarboro (N.C.) four-star running back **Todd Gurley** has a great combination of speed and size.

13 UCLA

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DB – 4, DE – 3, DT – 1, K – 1, LB – 1, OL – 5, QB – 1, RB – 1, TE – 1, WR – 5

THE BUZZ: Jim Mora immediately got to work after being hired at UCLA and put together a strong finish over the final month of the recruiting season. His top get was five-star defensive tackle **Ellis McCarthy** from Monrovia (Calif.) High.

Other prospects landed over the final month of the process include Old Tappan (N.J.) High four-star athlete **Devin Fuller**, Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian four-star wide receiver **Jordan Payton**, Chandler (Ariz.) High four-star wide receiver **Javon Williams**, and Murrieta (Calif.) Vista Murrieta four-star defensive end **Jeremy Castro**.

Westlake Village (Calif.) Oaks Christian four-star defensive back **Ishmael Adams** pledged to Mora and company after their arrival.

One holdover from the previous staff that is capable of making an immediate impact is Compton (Calif.) Dominguez four-star offensive tackle **Lacy Westbrook**.

14 Clemson

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DB – 3, DE – 2, DT – 3, K – 1, LB – 1, OL – 5, QB – 1, WR – 1

THE BUZZ: Clemson put together a solid class that added talented depth and some prospects that could contribute early on in their careers.

The top prospect in the class was Tallahassee (Fla.) North Florida Christian four-star safety **Travis Blanks**. The top offensive prospect was Charlotte (N.C.) Phillip O Berry Academy of Technology four-star wide receiver **Germone Hopper**.

Jonesboro (Ark.) Jonesboro Senior four-star athlete **Zac Brooks** could find his way onto the field early. His primary position will be as a running back, but his unique combination of speed and size at 6-2, 180 pounds makes him valuable in Clemson's spread attack.

Defensive tackle **Carlos Watkins**, a four-star prospect from Forest City (N.C.) Chase could find his way onto the field early.

Buffalo (N.Y.) St. Joseph's four-star quarterback **Chad Kelly** likely won't be called upon early in his career at Clemson, but he is a good athlete with a big arm who can fill the void that will be left when Tajh Boyd concludes his career.

15 Texas A&M

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 1, DB – 3, DE – 5, DT – 1, LB – 1, OL – 3, QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: Texas A&M prepared for their move to the SEC by signing a strong class led by one of the nation's best offensive players. Spring (Texas) Dekaney five-star running back **Trey Williams** is a dynamic weapon who had an ultra-productive high school career, with more than 8,000 rushing yards over his final three seasons and scoring over 80 rushing touchdowns.

The offensive class also includes Houston (Texas) four-star quarterback **Matt Davis** and Dallas (Texas) Skyline four-star wide receiver **Thomas Johnson**. Davis can make things happen with his arms and his legs and shows great leadership skills. Johnson could work inside or outside and is very good after the catch. The best offensive lineman in the group is Missouri City (Texas) Elkins four-star center **Mike Matthews**, who was the nation's top center in the 2012 class.

The defensive class is led by Mesquite (Texas) Horn four-star cornerback **DeVante Harris**. Harris is a 5-11, 160-pound cornerback. Four-star outside linebacker **Jordan Richmond** of Denton (Texas) Ryan also make his way onto the field early.

Carthage (Texas) High four-star athlete **Edward Pope** (6-3, 170) was a defensive back for most of his high school career, but had a great senior season at wide receiver. He could contribute on either side of the ball.

16 Oregon

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 1, DB – 3, DE – 5, DT – 1, K – 1, LB – 1, OL – 1, QB – 2, RB – 1, TE – 2, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: Chip Kelly and Oregon signed 21 prospects in their 2012 class. The top prospect was Elk Grove (Calif.) Pleasant Grove four-star defensive end **Arik Armstead**. Armstead could play on either side of the ball, as he also projects as an offensive tackle at 6-8, 280 pounds

Armstead wasn't the only standout defensive end in the Oregon's class. He was joined by Portland (Oregon) Central Catholic four-star defensive end **Alex Balducci** and Honolulu (Hawaii) Punahou four-star defensive end **DeForest Buckner**.

Hillsboro (Ore.) Liberty four-star outside linebacker **Brett Bafaro** was another top defensive signee for the Ducks.

On the offensive side, Oregon loaded up with top-tier talent at the skill positions. Rocklin (Calif.) Whitney four-star quarterback **Jake Rodrigues** has excellent arm strength and accuracy.

Rodrigues will like targets such as Cincinnati (Ohio) Taft four-star wide receiver **Dwayne Stanford** and Missouri City (Texas) Hightower four-star wide receiver **Bralon Addison**. Oregon also added two athletic tight ends in Lyndhurst (Ohio) Brush four-star **Pharaoh Brown** and Aurora (Colo.) Grandview four-star **Evan Baylis**. San Jose (Calif.) Valley Christian four-star running back **Byron Marshall** is one of the nation's best.

17 Tennessee

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DB – 3, DE – 3, DT – 2, K – 1, LB – 1, QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 1, WR – 4

THE BUZZ: The Volunteers were looking for immediate help at wide receiver and they turned to the junior college ranks in Hutchinson (Kansas) Hutchinson Community College four-star wideout **Cordarrelle Patterson**. Patterson, who is 6-4, 205 pounds, is a big outside target who can to stretch the field.

Patterson leads a strong group of wide receivers. He is joined by Norcross (Ga.) High four-star wide receiver **Jason Croom**, Jackson (Tenn.) Christian four-star wide receiver **Drae Bowles**, and Orlando (Fla.) Edgewater four-star wide receiver **Alton Howard**.

They will be happy to know that they are coming in along with a talented quarterback in Fruit Cove (Fla.) Bartram Trail four-star signal-caller **Nathan Peterman**. Peterman is a smart quarterback with a strong arm, nice touch.

Four-star athlete **Davante Bourque** from Crowley (La.) High will likely end up at running back. The 6-3, 200-pounder provides good size in the offensive backfield and is explosive with the ball in his hands.

The defensive class is headlined by Dallas (Texas) Wilmer-Hutchins four-star safety **LaDarrell McNeil**. Joining McNeill in the secondary will be fellow four-star cornerback **Deion Bonner** of Columbus (Ga.) Carver.

A pair of four-star defensive tackles also are making their way to Knoxville. Milledgeville (Ga.) Georgia Military College defensive tackle **Daniel McCullers** was a top junior college prospect. Flint (Mich.) Powers Catholic defensive tackle **Danny O'Brien** is coming from the high school ranks.

18 LSU

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 1, DB – 5, DE – 1, K – 1, LB – 5, OL – 5, QB – 1, TE – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: Despite coming off a season where the Tigers played for the national championship, they find themselves down in the pack a bit with regards to recruiting rankings. While the class doesn't have any five-star prospects or headline grabbers, it does include a lot of talent.

One big need addressed by Les Miles and his staff was along the offensive line. They brought in five linemen led by New Orleans (La.) Edna Karr four-star offensive tackle **Derek Edinburgh** and Buford (Ga.) four-star offensive guard **Vadal Alexander**.

The Tigers are also bringing in skill talent on the offensive side of the ball in two outside receivers. Pompano Beach (Fla.) Blanche Ely four-star wide receiver **Avery Johnson** and Breaux Bridge (La.) four-star wide receiver **Travin Dural** are both big, athletic targets.

The top defensive signee for the Tigers was New Orleans (La.) O. Perry Walker four-star cornerback **Dwayne Thomas**. Other top defensive signees include Katy (Texas) Morton Ranch four-star defensive end **Danielle Hunter**, Oxford (Ala.) four-star outside linebacker **Kwon Alexander** and Patterson (La.) four-star outside linebacker **Lorenzo Phillips**.

Four-star athlete **Lamar Louis** from Breaux Bridge (La.) High will also likely end up on defense, starting his career at linebacker.

19 South Carolina

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 5, DE, – 2, DT – 1, K – 1, LB – 2, OL – 5, QB – 1, RB – 2, TE – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: The Gamecocks landed two major offensive weapons in their 2012 signing class in Stone Mountain (Ga.) Stephenson four-star running back **Mike Davis** and Lexington (S.C.) High four-star wide receiver **Shaq Roland**. Davis is a productive back with good size and speed who can do work in-between the tackles or on the outside. Roland is a big-play wide receiver who can score in a variety of ways.

Another wide receiver to keep an eye on will be Monroe (N.C.) Sun Valley four-star **Jody Fuller**. The 6-0, 200-pound wide receiver with 4.5 speed could find a role early in his career with the Gamecocks.

Four-star athlete **Jerell Adams**, who is making his way to South Carolina after spending a year at Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy, will likely start out as a tight end.

The five-man offensive line class is led by four-star tackle **Brock Stadnik** of Greensboro (N.C.) Western Guilford and four-star guard **Joe Harris** of Lithonia (Ga.).

The top defensive signees for Steve Spurrier and his staff are a pair of safeties — Cape Coral (Fla.) Island Coast four-star **Jordan Diggs** and College Park (Ga.) Banneker four-star **Chaz Elder**.

20 Notre Dame

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 4, DE – 1, DT – 2, OL – 3, QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: Notre Dame landed its biggest commitment in mid-January when five-star quarterback **Gunner Kiel** of Columbus (Ind.) East High flipped his commitment from LSU and immediately enrolled in South Bend. Kiel, the top-ranked pro-style quarterback in the country, has the potential to be one of the next great college quarterbacks.

In the future, Scottsdale (Ariz.) Chaparral four-star wide receiver **Davonte Neal** will likely be a popular target for Kiel. Neal is a smooth wide receiver with great speed who is excellent after the catch.

Austintown (Ohio) Austintown Fitch four-star running back **William Mahone** will be another key cog in Notre Dame's offensive attack. Everett (Wash.) Mariner four-star athlete **KeiVarae Russell** could end up in the backfield with Mahone or on the outside as a wide receiver, but his future is definitely on the offensive side of the ball.

Las Vegas (Nev.) Bishop Gorman four-star offensive tackle **Ronnie Stanley** is the top offensive linemen making his way to South Bend.

On defense, East Orange (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep four-star safety **Elijah Shumate** will likely be looked upon to contribute early in a thin defensive backfield for Notre Dame.

The front seven added some bulk on defense when a pair of four-star defensive tackles — Indianapolis (Ind.) Warren Central's **Sheldon Day** and Rochester (N.Y.) Aquinas Institute's **Jarron Jones** — signed with Notre Dame.

Fresno (Calif.) Washington Union four-star cornerback **Tee Shapard** was a top signee for the Irish and enrolled early in South Bend, but he has already withdrawn from school and departed from Brian Kelly's team.

21 Washington

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DB – 4, DE – 4, DT – 1, K – 2, LB – 1, OL – 5, QB – 2, RB – 2, WR – 1

THE BUZZ: Washington's class was headlined by Sacramento (Calif.) Grant five-star safety **Shaq Thompson**. Thompson pledged his services to the Huskies and gives them a physical, imposing safety to build a defense around. He was considered the top prospect in California for the 2012 class.

On the offensive side of the ball, Steve Sarkisian is getting a pair of talented quarterbacks to work with in Denver (Colo.) Mullen four-star **Cyler Miles** and Mercer Island (Wash.) High four-star **Jeff Lindquist**.

Four-star athlete **Jaydon Mickens** likely ends up on the offensive side of the ball as a wide receiver. The 5-8, 170-pounder is a quick, elusive target in the open field who will likely play the slot position.

On defense, Compton (Calif.) Dominguez four-star cornerback **Brandon Beaver** will join Thompson in the secondary.

Patterson (Calif.) High four-star defensive end **Pio Vatuvei** could also find his way onto the field early on in his career.

22 Virginia Tech

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DB – 5, DE – 3, DT – 2, LB – 5, OL – 3, RB – 3, TE – 1, WR – 3

THE BUZZ: The top player in Frank Beamer's 2012 signing class was Midlothian (Va.) Clover Hill four-star athlete **Joel Caleb**. Caleb will likely end up a wide receiver when he arrives in Blacksburg and he will be a nice weapon for the Hokies. He is a physical player at 6-2, 201 pounds with the ability to make big plays in a variety of ways.

Caleb wasn't the only top offensive weapon lured to Virginia Tech in 2012, as a pair of running back signees are worth keeping an eye on. Chesapeake (Va.) Oscar Smith four-star running back **J.C. Coleman** and Exton (Pa.) Downingtown East four-star running back **Drew Harris** are both explosive. Coleman is more of a small, shifty back, while Harris is a physical, tough runner.

On defense, the Hokies loaded up at linebacker, signing a total of five at the position. Chesterfield (Va.) Lloyd C. Bird four-star outside linebacker **Deon Clarke** is the top prospect in the group. Also keep an eye on Clifton (Va.) Centreville four-star outside linebacker **Ken Ekanem** and Ringgold (Va.) Dan River four-star outside linebacker **Trey Edmunds**.

Miami (Fla.) Central four-star cornerback **Donaldven Manning** isn't physically intimidating, but he has excellent quickness and good instincts making him a perfect fit in the Virginia Tech secondary.

23 California

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 2, DT – 1, K – 1, LB – 2, OL – 4, QB – 1, RB – 2, WR – 4

THE BUZZ: The top prospect in the Golden Bears' 2012 signing class is a talented pro-style quarterback Danville (Calif.) San Ramon Valley four-star signal-caller **Zach Kline**. Kline has shown the ability to attack all parts of the field with a big arm and good accuracy.

He will have a nice group of receivers stepping on campus along with him, led by a trio of four-star wideouts — Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco's **Bryce Treggs**, Lakewood's (Calif.) **Darius Power**, and Upland (Calif.) High's **Kenny Lawler**. There is also a good chance that Lakewood (Wash.) Lakes four-star athlete **Cedric Dozier** ends up catching passes.

The offensive line signing class was led by Richmond (Calif.) Salesia four-star offensive tackle **Freddie Tagaloa**.

Cal signed just one defensive prospect considered a four-star or higher and that was Concord (Calif.) De La Salle inside linebacker **Michael Barton**.

24 Rutgers

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 3, DE – 2, K – 1, LB – 2, OL – 5, QB – 1, RB – 1, WR – 4

THE BUZZ: Despite going through a coaching change on the verge of signing day, Rutgers was able to retain a majority of its commitments and add a few down the stretch to finish with a top 25 class.

The top commitment for the Scarlet Knights came from Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep five-star defensive end **Darius Hamilton,** who opted to stay home for his college career just days before signing day.

Another top addition on the defensive side was Sicklerville (N.J.) Timber Creek four-star inside linebacker **Quanzell Lambert**. The 6-2, 230-pound inside linebacker could be an early contributor for the Big East program.

The offensive class for Rutgers was led by Boyertown (Pa.) Boyertown Area Senior four-star offensive tackle **Chris Muller** and fellow four-star offensive tackle **J.J. Denman** from Fairless Hills (Pa.) Pennsbury.

Ramsey (N.J.) Don Bosco Prep four-star wide receiver **Leonte Carroo** is the top skill position player coming in on the offensive side of the ball.

25 Nebraska

THE PARTICULARS: ATH – 2, DB – 1, DE – 2, DT – 2, LB – 4, OL – 2, QB – 1, RB – 1, TE – 1, WR – 1

THE BUZZ: Nebraska signed a smaller class that was split down the middle with regards to offensive and defensive signees. The top signee in the class came on the defensive side of the ball in Thatcher (Ariz.) Eastern Arizona Junior College four-star cornerback **Mohammed Seisay**. Seisay can be an immediate contributor for the Cornhuskers.

Other possible early contributors on defense for Bo Pelini and his staff will be Riverside (Calif.) Riverside Community College four-star outside linebacker **Zaire Anderson** and Akron (Ohio) Hoban four-star defensive end **Greg McMullen**.

On offense, Arvada (Colo.) Arvada West four-star offensive tackle **Paul Thurston** is the top signee for the Huskers.

Lombard (Ill.) Montini four-star wide receiver **Jordan Westerkamp** is the top skill position player on offense making his way to Lincoln next year.

Winnfield (La.) Winnfield Senior four-star athlete **Alonzo Moore** has the capability to contribute on either side of the ball upon his arrival at Nebraska.

100 FOR 2012

INCOMING FRESHMEN

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Rk	Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School	College
QUARTERBACKS				
10.	Jameis Winston	6-4/200	Hueytown (AL) Hueytown	Florida State
20.	Gunner Kiel	6-4/220	Columbus (IN) East	Notre Dame
35.	Cyler Miles	6-4/220	Denver (CO) Mullen	Washington
44.	Zach Kline	6-2/210	Danville (CA) San Ramon Valley	California
59.	Tanner Mangum	6-3/195	Eagle (ID) Eagle	BYU
RUNNING BACKS				
5.	Johnathan Gray	5-11/190	Aledo (TX) Aledo	Texas
12.	T.J. Yeldon	6-2/205	Daphne (AL) Daphne	Alabama
15.	Trey Williams	5-8/175	Spring (TX) Dekaney	Texas A&M
30.	Randy Johnson	5-9/180	Miami (FL) Miami Norland	Miami (FL)
38.	Mario Pender	6-0/185	Cape Coral (FL) Island Coast	Florida State
42.	Todd Gurley	6-1/195	Tarboro (NC) Tarboro	Georgia
48.	Keith Marshall	5-11/190	Raleigh (NC) Millbrook	Georgia
55.	Rushel Shell	6-0/210	Aliquippa (PA) Hopewell	Pittsburgh
63.	Mike Davis	5-10/200	Stone Mountain (GA) Stephenson	South Carolina
WIDE RECEIVERS				
1.	Dorial Green-Beckham	6-6/220	Springfield (MO) Hillcrest	Missouri
8.	Stefon Diggs	6-0/185	Olney (MD) Our Lady Of Good Counsel	Maryland
18.	Nelson Agholor	6-2/180	Tampa (FL) Berkeley Prep	USC
34.	Thomas Johnson	6-0/180	Dallas (TX) Skyline	Texas A&M
41.	Cayleb Jones	6-3/198	Austin (TX) Austin	Texas
45.	Amari Cooper	6-1/175	Miami (FL) Northwestern	Alabama
49.	Deontay Greenberry	6-3/187	Fresno (CA) Washington Union	Houston
58.	Chris Black	5-11/170	Jacksonville (FL) First Coast	Alabama
62.	Durron Neal	6-1/195	State Louis (MO) DeSmet	Oklahoma
66.	Shaq Roland	6-1/170	Lexington (SC) Lexington	South Carolina
75.	Germone Hopper	6-0/165	Charlotte (NC) Phillip O Berry Acad Of Tech	Clemson
81.	Bryce Treggs	5-11/171	Bellflower (CA) State John Bosco	California
87.	Gabriel Marks	6-0/175	Los Angeles (CA) Venice	Washington State
90.	JaQuay Williams	6-3/204	Tyrone (GA) Sandy Creek	Auburn
93.	Jordan Payton	6-2/199	Westlake Village (CA) Oaks Christian	UCLA
TIGHT ENDS				
54.	Kent Taylor	6-5/220	Land O'Lakes (FL) Land O' Lakes	Florida
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN				
2.	D.J. Humphries	6-5/265	Charlotte (NC) Mallard Creek	Florida
16.	Zach Banner	6-9/310	Lakewood (WA) Lakes	USC
19.	Kyle Murphy	6-7/275	San Clemente (CA) San Clemente	Stanford
22.	Kyle Kalis	6-5/302	Lakewood (OH) State Edward	Michigan
23.	John Theus	6-6/292	Jacksonville (FL) Bolles	Georgia
29.	Jordan Simmons	6-5/333	Encino (CA) Crespi	USC
32.	Andrus Peat	6-7/305	Tempe (AZ) Corona Del Sol	Stanford
33.	Joshua Garnett	6-5/295	Puyallup (WA) Puyallup	Stanford
46.	Max Tuerk	6-6/294	Santa Margarita (CA) Santa Margarita	USC
52.	Isaac Seumalo	6-3/280	Corvallis (OR) Corvallis	Oregon State
67.	Kennedy Estelle	6-7/300	Pearland (TX) Dawson	Texas
74.	Avery Young	6-6/273	Palm Beach Gardens (FL) Palm Beach Gardens	Auburn
78.	Erik Magnuson	6-6/275	Carlsbad (CA) La Costa Canyon	Michigan
96.	Curtis Riser	6-3/283	DeSoto (TX) DeSoto	Texas
100.	Chris Muller	6-6/287	Boyertown (PA) Boyertown Area Senior	Rutgers
DEFENSIVE ENDS				
6.	Jonathan Bullard	6-4/255	Shelby (NC) Crest	Florida
9.	Noah Spence	6-4/245	Harrisburg (PA) Bishop McDevitt	Ohio State
11.	Darius Hamilton	6-4/245	Ramsey (NJ) Don Bosco Prep	Rutgers
25.	Adolphus Washington	6-4/230	Cincinnati (OH) Taft	Ohio State
27.	Aziz Shittu	6-3/275	Atwater (CA) Buhach	Stanford
28.	Dante Fowler Jr.	6-3/232	State Petersburg (FL) Lakewood	Florida
36.	Chris Casher	6-4/225	Mobile (AL) Davidson	Florida State
50.	Eli Harold	6-4/215	Virginia Beach (VA) Ocean Lakes	Virginia
51.	Channing Ward	6-4/250	Aberdeen (MS) Aberdeen	Mississippi
53.	Leonard Williams	6-5/254	Daytona Beach (FL) Mainland	USC
56.	Jordan Jenkins	6-3/245	Hamilton (GA) Harris County	Georgia
61.	Arik Armstead	6-8/280	Elk Grove (CA) Pleasant Grove	Oregon
65.	Javonte Magee	6-5/262	San Antonio (TX) Sam Houston	Baylor
92.	Tyriq McCord	6-3/222	Tampa (FL) Jefferson	Miami (FL)
95.	Se'von Pittman	6-5/245	Canton (OH) McKinley	Ohio State
97.	Alex Balducci	6-4/262	Portland (OR) Central Catholic	Oregon
99.	Ifeadi Odenigbo	6-4/210	Centerville (OH) Centerville	Northwestern
DEFENSIVE TACKLES				
3.	Mario Edwards	6-4/275	Denton (TX) Ryan	Florida State
7.	Eddie Goldman	6-4/307	Washington (DC) Friendship Collegiate Academy	Florida State
14.	Ondre Pipkins	6-3/325	Kansas City (MO) Park Hill	Michigan
21.	Ellis McCarthy	6-5/311	Monrovia (CA) Monrovia	UCLA
26.	Malcom Brown	6-2/280	Brenham (TX) Brenham	Texas
64.	Tommy Schutt	6-2/301	Glen Ellyn (IL) Glenbard West	Ohio State
72.	Jonathan Taylor	6-4/315	Millen (GA) Jenkins County	Georgia
LINEBACKERS				
40.	Jabari Ruffin	6-4/230	Downey (CA) Downey	USC
43.	Reggie Ragland	6-4/245	Madison (AL) Bob Jones	Alabama
47.	Ukeme Eligwe	6-3/210	Stone Mountain (GA) Stone Mountain	Florida State
73.	Vince Biegel	6-3/210	Wisconsin Rapids (WI) Wisc Rapids Lincoln	Wisconsin
77.	Noor Davis	6-4/233	Leesburg (FL) Leesburg	Stanford
89.	Nick Dawson	6-3/228	Charlotte (NC) Phillip O Berry Acad Of Tech	Louisville
91.	Kwontie Moore	6-2/243	Norfolk (VA) Norfolk Christian School	Virginia
94.	Raphael Kirby	6-0/208	Stone Mountain (GA) Stephenson	Miami (FL)
98.	Ryan Anderson	6-3/250	Daphne (AL) Daphne	Alabama
DEFENSIVE BACKS				
4.	Shaq Thompson	6-2/210	Sacramento (CA) Grant	Washington
13.	Tracy Howard	5-11/175	Miramar (FL) Miramar	Miami (FL)
17.	Landon Collins	5-11/199	Geismar (LA) Dutchtown	Alabama
57.	Alex Carter	6-0/193	Ashburn (VA) Briar Woods	Stanford
60.	Travis Blanks	6-1/195	Tallahassee (FL) North Florida Christian	Clemson
68.	Ronald Darby	5-11/172	Oxon Hill (MD) Potomac	Florida State
69.	DeVante Harris	5-11/160	Mesquite (TX) Horn	Texas A&M
70.	Marcus Maye	6-1/195	Melbourne (FL) Holy Trinity	Florida
76.	Tee Shepard	6-1/180	Fresno (CA) Washington Union	Notre Dame
80.	Brian Poole	5-11/187	Bradenton (FL) Southeast	Florida
82.	Kevon Seymour	6-0/180	Pasadena (CA) Muir	USC
83.	Deon Bush	6-1/185	Miami (FL) Columbus	Miami (FL)
85.	Yuri Wright	6-2/180	Ramsey (NJ) Don Bosco Prep	Colorado
86.	LaDarrell McNeil	6-1/190	Dallas (TX) Wilmer-Hutchins	Tennessee
88.	Geno Smith	5-11/180	Atlanta (GA) St Pius X School	Alabama
ATHLETES				
24.	Eddie Williams	6-4/204	Panama City (FL) Arnold	Alabama
31.	Josh Harvey-Clemons	6-5/208	Valdosta (GA) Lowndes	Georgia
37.	Devin Fuller	6-0/185	Old Tappan (NJ) Old Tappan	UCLA
39.	Kendall Sanders	6-1/175	Athens (TX) Athens	Texas
71.	D.J. Foster	5-11/190	Scottsdale (AZ) Saguaro	Arizona State
79.	Cyrus Jones	5-11/183	Baltimore (MD) Gilman School	Alabama
84.	Joel Caleb	6-2/201	Midlothian (VA) Clover Hill	Virginia Tech

100 FOR 2013

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

TOP 100 PLAYERS BY POSITION

Rk.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Hometown/School

QUARTERBACKS

8.	Max Browne	6-5/202	Sammamish, WA/Skyline
11.	Tyrone Swoopes	6-5/220	Whitewright, TX/Whitewright
16.	Shane Morris	6-3/183	Warren, MI/De La Salle
47.	Ryan Burns	6-4/218	Ashburn, VA/Stone Bridge
71.	Troy Williams	6-0/173	Harbor City, CA/Narbonne
80.	Johnathon McCrary	6-3/180	Ellenwood, GA/Cedar Grove

RUNNING BACKS

9.	Thomas Tyner	6-0/200	Beaverton, OR/Aloha
18.	Ty Isaac	6-3/215	Joliet, IL/Joliet Catholic
20.	Altee Tenpenny	5-11/200	North Little Rock, AR/North Little Rock
23.	Greg Bryant	5-11/200	Delray Beach, FL/American Heritage School
48.	Justin Davis	6-1/195	Stockton, CA/Lincoln
64.	Derrick Green	6-0/215	Richmond, VA/Hermitage
74.	Kailo Moore	5-10/180	Rosedale, MS/West Bolivar
87.	Taquan Mizzell	5-10/180	Virginia Beach, VA/Bayside
90.	Ryan Green	5-10/195	State Petersburg, FL/Catholic

WIDE RECEIVERS

13.	Ricky Seals-Jones	6-5/220	Sealy, TX/Sealy
19.	Derrick Griffin	6-6/215	Rosenberg, TX/Terry
24.	Marquez North	6-3/205	Charlotte, NC/Mallard Creek
26.	Robert Foster	6-3/170	Monaca, PA/Central Valley
31.	Laquon Treadwell	6-3/183	Crete, IL/Crete Monee
45.	Stacy Coley	6-1/175	Oakland Park, FL/Northeast
52.	Steven Mitchell	5-11/170	Mission Hills, CA/Bishop Alemany
59.	Ahmad Fulwood	6-4/197	Jacksonville, FL/Bishop Kenny
61.	Jake Oliver	6-4/194	Dallas, TX/Jesuit
97.	Demarcus Robinson	6-2/200	Fort Valley, GA/Peach County

TIGHT ENDS

22.	Adam Breneman	6-5/220	Camp Hill, PA/Cedar Cliff
35.	O.J. Howard	6-6/226	Autauga, AL/Autauga Academy
55.	DeSean Smith	6-4/222	Lake Charles, LA/Barbe
96.	Jake Butt	6-6/230	Pickerington, OH/Pickerington North

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

3.	Laremy Tunsil	6-6/275	Lake City, FL/Columbia
25.	Kent Perkins	6-5/300	Dallas, TX/Lake Highlands
27.	Ethan Pocic	6-7/285	Lemont, IL/Lemont
46.	Chris Fox	6-6/297	Parker, CO/Ponderosa
49.	Steve Elmer	6-6/305	Midland, MI/Midland
51.	Jake Raulerson	6-4/250	Celina, TX/Celina
54.	Patrick Kugler	6-5/280	Wexford, PA/North Allegheny
57.	Austin Golson	6-4/277	Prattville, AL/Prattville
60.	Kyle Bosch	6-5/285	Wheaton, IL/State Francis
67.	Reeve Koehler	6-3/280	Honolulu, HI/State Louis
83.	Evan Lisle	6-6/265	Centerville, OH/Centerville
92.	Darius James	6-5/319	Killeen, TX/Harker Heights
98.	Aaron Cochran	6-6/320	Atwater, CA/Buhach

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1.	Robert Nkemdiche	6-5/260	Loganville, GA/Grayson
6.	Kenny Bigelow	6-3/285	Elkton, MD/Eastern Christian Academy
14.	Joey Bosa	6-5/260	Fort Lauderdale, FL/St. Thomas Aquinas
21.	Eddie Vanderdoes	6-4/285	Placer, CA/Placer
42.	Dee Liner	6-2/274	Muscle Shoals, AL/Muscle Shoals
50.	Garrett Sickels	6-4/240	Little Silver, NJ/Red Bank Regional
73.	Isaac Rochell	6-5/260	McDonough, GA/Eagle's Landing Christian
76.	Jordan Sherit	6-4/245	Tampa, FL/Hillsborough
81.	Kylie Fitts	6-4/260	Redlands, CA/East Valley
91.	Carl Lawson	6-2/253	Alpharetta, GA/Milton
93.	Joe Mathis	6-4/254	Upland, CA/Upland
99.	D.J. Ward	6-4/240	Lawton, OK/Lawton
100.	Jonathan Allen	6-3/225	Ashburn, VA/Stone Bridge

DEFENSIVE TACKLES

33.	Montravius Adams	6-3/290	Vienna, GA/Dooly County
43.	Henry Poggi	6-3/250	Baltimore, MD/Gilman School
63.	Isaiah Golden	6-2/295	Carthage, TX/Carthage
69.	A'Shawn Robinson	6-4/302	Fort Worth, TX/Arlington Heights
70.	Michael Hill	6-3/315	Pendleton, SC/Pendleton
78.	Greg Webb	6-2/290	Sicklerville, NJ/Timber Creek
82.	Caleb Brantley	6-3/285	Crescent City, FL/Crescent City
85.	Jaynard Bostwick	6-4/291	Port State Lucie, FL/St. Lucie West Centennial
89.	Justin Manning	6-3/275	Dallas, TX/Kimball

LINEBACKERS

2.	Reuben Foster	6-2/228	Auburn, AL/Auburn
12.	Matthew Thomas	6-3/201	Miami, FL/Booker T. Washington
15.	E.J. Levenberry Jr.	6-3/226	Woodbridge, VA/C. D. Hylton
17.	Michael Hutchings	6-2/210	Concord, CA/De La Salle
34.	Jaylon Smith	6-3/202	Fort Wayne, IN/Bishop Luers
36.	Trey Johnson	6-1/220	Lawrenceville, GA/Central Gwinnett
37.	Dorian O'Daniel	6-1/205	Olney, MD/Our Lady Of Good Counsel
40.	Chans Cox	6-3/220	Lakeside, AZ/Blue Ridge
44.	Mike McCray	6-4/230	Trotwood, OH/Trotwood-Madison
53.	Daniel McMillian	6-3/220	Jacksonville, FL/First Coast
62.	Peter Kalambayi	6-3/229	Matthews, NC/Butler
68.	Doug Randolph	6-3/215	Richmond, VA/Woodberry Forest School
88.	Johnny O'Neal	6-2/225	Dublin, GA/West Laurens
95.	Larenz Bryant	6-1/203	Charlotte, NC/Vance

DEFENSIVE BACKS

4.	Kendall Fuller	6-0/185	Olney, MD/Our Lady Of Good Counsel
5.	Su'a Cravens	6-1/205	Murrieta, CA/Vista Murrieta
7.	Cameron Burrows	6-1/195	Trotwood, OH/Trotwood-Madison
10.	Vernon Hargreaves III	5-10/177	Tampa, FL/Wharton
28.	Eli Woodard	6-1/185	Voorhees, NJ/Eastern
30.	Max Redfield	6-2/195	Mission Viejo, CA/Mission Viejo
32.	Leon McQuay III	6-2/177	Seffner, FL/Armwood
38.	Antonio Conner	6-2/192	Batesville, MS/South Panola
39.	Marcell Harris	6-2/205	Orlando, FL/Dr. Phillips
56.	Mackensie Alexander	5-11/175	Immokalee, FL/Immokalee
58.	Dashon Hunt	5-10/175	Westlake Village, CA/Westlake
65.	Tray Matthews	6-1/190	Newnan, GA/Newnan
72.	Holland Fisher	6-2/205	Midlothian, VA/Manchester
77.	Dymonte Thomas	6-1/175	Alliance, OH/Marlington
79.	Will Likely	5-7/171	Belle Glade, FL/Glades Central
84.	Priest Willis	6-2/200	Tempe, AZ/Marcos De Niza
86.	Kameron Miles	6-2/200	Mesquite, TX/West Mesquite
94.	Nick Washington	6-0/180	Jacksonville, FL/Trinity Christian

ATHLETES

29.	Derrick Henry	6-3/241	Yulee, FL/Yulee
41.	Jalin Marshall	6-0/190	Middletown, OH/Middletown
66.	John Diarse	6-0/202	Monroe, LA/Neville
75.	ArDarius Stewart	6-3/190	Fultondale, AL/Fultondale

TOP 10 SCHOOLS BY POSITION

Quarterback

1. Florida State
2. Washington
3. Purdue
4. Notre Dame
5. Oregon
6. Cal
7. Southern Miss
8. BYU
9. Auburn
9. Cincinnati

Running back

1. Georgia
2. Alabama
3. Virginia Tech
4. Miami
5. Michigan
6. Ole Miss
7. Texas
8. Texas A&M
9. Ohio State
10. Cincinnati

Wide Receiver

1. Oklahoma
2. Tennessee
3. Miami
4. Maryland
5. Cal
6. USC
7. Texas Tech
8. UCLA
9. Texas A&M
10. South Carolina

Tight End

1. Florida
2. Oregon
3. Auburn
4. Oklahoma
5. Oregon State
5. TCU
7. USC
7. USF
9. Oklahoma State
10. Michigan

Offensive Line

1. Stanford
2. Auburn
3. USC
4. Michigan
5. Texas
6. Oregon State
7. Oklahoma
8. Ohio State
9. Florida
10. Rutgers

Defensive Tackle

1. Florida State
2. Texas
3. Alabama
4. Michigan
5. Florida
6. Clemson
7. UCLA
8. Mississippi State
8. Tennessee
10. Notre Dame

Defensive End

1. Florida
2. Ohio State
3. Oregon
4. Stanford
5. Georgia
6. Miami
7. Arkansas
8. Virginia
9. Mississippi State
9. USC

Linebacker

1. Alabama
2. Texas
3. LSU
4. Michigan
4. Virginia Tech
6. Ohio State
7. Louisville
8. Nebraska
9. USC
10. Florida State

Defensive Back

1. Miami
2. Alabama
3. Washington
4. Florida
5. Ohio State
6. Florida State
7. South Carolina
8. Notre Dame
9. USC
10. Virginia Tech

Athlete

1. Texas
2. Alabama
3. Georgia
4. UCLA
5. Georgia Tech
5. Mississippi State
7. Washington
8. Virginia Tech
9. Clemson
10. Virginia

Kicker

1. Florida State
1. Purdue
3. Duke
4. Alabama
4. Clemson
6. Georgia
6. TCU
8. Washington
9. South Carolina

BIG TEN RECRUITING

By Josh Helmholdt
Rivals.com

Ohio State

Overview: The complexion of this class changed on Nov. 28 when Urban Meyer was named head coach. Jim Tressel's resignation and the looming threat of NCAA sanctions had the Buckeyes recruiting at lower levels than years past, and losing top in-state recruits to rival Midwest programs. Due to their in-state reputation, the Buckeyes had picked off a few of Ohio's top prospects — including running backs **Bri'onte Dunn** (6-1, 214-pounds) and **Warren Ball** (6-2, 200). The bulk of the class, however, and nine of their top 13 rated commitments were landed after Meyer was named head coach. The Buckeyes also damaged several of their Big Ten and Midwest foes by snapping up prospects who were previously committed elsewhere. They took Rivals100 defensive tackle **Tommy Schutt** from Penn State, Rivals100 defensive end **Se'von Pittman** from Michigan State and Rivals250 offensive tackle **Taylor Decker** from Notre Dame.

Headliners: Five-stars **Noah Spence** and **Adolphus Washington** are a potent pair of bookend defensive ends.

Sleeper: Safety **Najee Murray** is rated four stars, but few knew of him when Ohio State offered last summer after seeing him at their camp.

Bottom Line: In the two-plus months between Meyer's hire and National Signing Day, the Buckeyes added nine Rivals250 prospects. This class was headed for disaster prior to Meyer coming on board, but rallied to sign the fourth best class in the country.

Michigan

Overview: Head coach Brady Hoke and his staff did most of their damage in the spring and summer, landing 20 commitments before the end of July. The Wolverine's capped off their class on Signing Day by adding four-star running back **Dennis Norfleet**, their ninth Rivals250 prospect in 2012. Their 20th and final commitment of the summer may have been their most notable, as they were able to sway five-star Cleveland offensive lineman **Kyle Kalis** away from rival Ohio State, where he had previously committed early in his junior year. Michigan bolstered its offensive line, defensive line and linebacker positions, signing four offensive linemen, four linebackers and six defensive linemen in the 2012 class.

Headliner: Expect defensive tackle **Ondre Pipkins** (6-3, 325) to step onto the field immediately as a freshman and possibly fill the spot vacated by graduating second team All-Big Ten nose tackle Mike Martin.

Sleeper: Kentucky three-star **Jeremy Clark** (6-4, 205) grew three inches between his junior and senior seasons and could project to either strong safety or outside linebacker at the college level.

Bottom Line: Under Hoke, Michigan has developed a game plan of securing the bulk of its class before prospects start their senior season. That allows them to get a jump on recruiting but also makes them susceptible to de-commitments. The Wolverines experienced a few de-commitments in the 2012 class, most notably Rivals250 tight end Pharaoh Brown, who signed with Oregon.

Nebraska

Overview: Although National Signing Day did not produce the flood of additions Nebraska fans had hoped for, they still landed three top talents on the first day of the signing period with four-star athlete **Alonzo Moore** and three-star defensive tackles **Vincent Valentine** and **Aaron Curry**. Nebraska addressed needs across the board, but was most effective at the linebacker position, where the Cornhuskers signed four prospects, headlined by four-star junior college transfer **Zaire Anderson** (6-1, 220). Nebraska fans are especially excited about four-star wide receiver **Jordan Westerkamp** (6-1, 195) who broke the state of Illinois' career receiving record after tallying 4,446 yards and 68 touchdowns over his final three prep seasons.

Headliner: The No. 8-ranked junior college prospect in the country, cornerback **Mohammed Seisay**, enrolled in January and was able to participate in spring ball with the Cornhuskers.

Sleeper: Bo Pelini's staff picked up explosive Toledo athlete **LeRoy Alexander** late in the process. The 6-2, 190-pound prospect could play either side of the ball and also is a return specialist.

Bottom Line: This was always going to be a small class for the Cornhuskers because of limited scholarship availability, but they did finish with 17 total signees who have an average star rating of 3.35. Nearly half of the Cornhusker's class waited to commit until the final month before National Signing Day.

Purdue

Overview: Purdue closed out National Signing Day week with the additions of three-star Kentucky offensive lineman **Joey Warburg** and three-star Chicago quarterback **Robert Gregory** to bring its class to a total of 26 players. What is most impressive about the Boilermakers' haul is that their 26 signees hail from 16 different states. Another anomaly in this class is that Purdue signed four quarterback prospects — **Austin Appleby**, **Aloyis Gray**, Gregory and **Bilal Marshall**. Appleby is the only pro-style quarterback of the bunch, so expect one or

TOP 20 INCOMING BIG TEN RECRUITS

Rk.	Player	Ht./Wt.	Pos.	Hometown/School	College
1.	Noah Spence	6-4/245	DE	Harrisburg (Pa.) Bishop McDevitt	Ohio State
2.	Ondre Pipkins	6-3/325	DT	Kansas City (Mo.) Park Hill	Michigan
3.	Kyle Kalis	6-5/302	OT	Lakewood (Ohio) St. Edward	Michigan
4.	Adolphus Washington	6-4/245	DE	Cincinnati (Ohio) Taft	Ohio State
5.	Tommy Schutt	6-2/301	DT	Glen Ellyn (Ill.) Glenbard West	Ohio State
6.	Vince Biegel	6-3/210	LB	Wisconsin Rapids (Wis.) Lincoln	Wisconsin
7.	Eric Magnuson	6-6/275	OT	Carlsbad (Calif.) La Costa Canyon	Michigan
8.	Se'von Pittman	6-3/259	DE	Canton (Ohio) McKinley	Ohio State
9.	Ifeadi Odenigbo	6-4/220	DE	Centerville (Ohio) High	Northwestern
10.	Joey O'Connor	6-4/295	OT	Windsor (Colo.) High	Ohio State
11.	Aaron Burbridge	6-1/175	WR	Farmington Hills (Mich.) Harrison	Michigan State
12.	Mohammed Seisay	6-2/200	CB	Thatcher (Ariz.) Eastern Arizona J.C.	Nebraska
13.	Joe Bolden	6-2/225	LB	Cincinnati (Ohio) Colerain	Michigan
14.	Bri'onte Dunn	6-1/214	RB	Canton (Ohio) Glenoak	Ohio State
15.	Eugene Lewis	6-2/181	WR	Plymouth (Pa.) Wyoming Valley	Penn State
16.	Josh Perry	6-4/231	LB	Galena (Ohio) Olentangy	Ohio State
17.	Paul Thurston	6-5/274	OT	Arvada (Colo.) West	Nebraska
18.	Dan Voltz	6-5/289	OG	Barrington (Ill.) High	Wisconsin
19.	David Perkins	6-2/225	ATH	South Bend (Ind.) Washington	Ohio State
20.	Camren Williams	6-2/215	LB	West Roxbury (Mass.) Catholic Memorial	Ohio State

more of the others to switch positions at some point during their college careers. They also addressed special teams by signing kicker **Paul Griggs** of North Carolina and punter **Thomas Meadows** of Virginia.

Headliner: The Boilermakers dipped into one of the top talent-producing prep programs on the East Coast for Olney (Md.) Good Counsel four-star defensive lineman **Ryan Watson**.

Sleeper: **Danny Anthrop** (6-0, 175) is a small school star who could make an early impact on special teams.

Bottom Line: Head coach Danny Hope and his staff signed prospects from New York to California and many places in between. Located in a state that features three BCS programs and a relatively small pool of talent, Purdue has had to get creative in recent years to succeed on the recruiting trail. Hitting 16 different states to sign its 2012 class is certainly creative.

Michigan State

Overview: The Spartans moved just ahead of Iowa for fifth place in the Big Ten class rankings when three-star wide receiver **Monty Madaris** finally did fax in his letter of intent to the Michigan State coaching staff the morning after National Signing Day. Madaris is part of an impressive wide receiver haul for Michigan State, which is also bolstered by the addition of Tennessee transfer **DeAnthony Arnett**. The Spartans had limited scholarships available in the 2012 class, but they took care of needs at receiver, tight end, offensive line and defensive back. They were one of the few schools to outduel Ohio State down the stretch for a recruit Urban Meyer wanted when they were able to land four-star Jeannette, Pa., safety **Demetrious Cox**.

Headliner: Wide receiver **Aaron Burbridge** should be able to step on the field as a freshman. He hails from Farmington (Mich.) Hills Harrison High, which has been a consistent feeder to the Spartans program.

Sleeper: Mark Dantonio's staff passed on some more widely known defensive tackles to sign Portland's **David Fennell** (6-3, 274).

Bottom Line: Michigan State has always relied heavily on securing talent from the states of Michigan and Ohio. With Brady Hoke leading a resurgent Michigan recruiting effort and Meyer grabbing almost any recruit he wanted in the final two months before National Signing Day, that certainly affected the Spartans in the 2012 class, but they showed great resilience in signing the conference's No. 5 class.

Iowa

Overview: Head coach Kirk Ferentz was able to announce a class of 24 signees on National Signing Day, including a quartet of four-star prospects. One of those four-stars is Pennsylvania running back **Greg Garmon**, who could be called upon early in his career after the Hawkeyes lost starter Marcus Coker to transfer following the 2011 season. They also stayed in-state and were able to lure running back **Barkley Hill** (6-0, 190) away from rival Iowa State to bolster a position at which the Hawkeyes have had trouble finding consistency in recent years.

Headliner: Chicago-area four-star **Jaleel Johnson** is one of two four-star defensive tackles Iowa signed in 2012. The 6-4, 300-pound Johnson could line up at defensive tackle or end in college.

Sleeper: Linebacker **Nate Meier** (6-2, 235) played 8-man football in high school, but he has the physical tools for the Big Ten.

Bottom Line: The Hawkeyes lost a lot of close battles for top prospects in 2012, but they were able to win enough to bring in a class of 24 that will provide depth and some star power. Offensive tackle **Ryan Ward** (6-6, 270) played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, and along with their two four-star defensive tackles in the 2012 class, the Hawkeyes will be stronger in the trenches as a result of this class. Eight of their 24 players signed in this class will come in along the offensive or defensive lines.

Penn State

Overview: Penn State had 16 commitments in the 2012 class when the Jerry Sandusky scandal broke in early November. Six of those players opted to de-commit and sign with other schools, but the 10 that remained formed the base of the 19-man class head coach Bill O'Brien eventually signed. With only a few weeks left until National Signing Day when O'Brien was hired, he often had to dip deeper to address needs, but the addition of four-star defensive tackle **Jamil Pollard** (6-5, 280) from New Jersey a month before Signing Day was a feather in O'Brien's cap to start his tenure with the Nittany Lions.

Headliner: Four-star wide receiver **Eugene Lewis** stuck with the Nittany Lions throughout their troubled stretch.

Sleeper: **Da'Quan Davis** is a lockdown cover corner with good speed and loose hips.

Bottom Line: Penn State's recruiting troubles started with the scandal in State College that resulted in the dismissal of iconic head coach Joe Paterno, then escalated when the University took almost two months to name his permanent successor — a coach who was still tied to a NFL playoff team. Bill O'Brien had just three and a half weeks to pull the 2012 class together, but was also juggling responsibilities with the New England Patriots. The result is a once-promising class that now just barely resides in the top 50 classes in the nation.

Northwestern

Overview: The Wildcats did a solid job in the Midwest and went into the state of Texas for several of their additions, including their final commit in the 2012 class — North Forney three-star athlete **Stephen Buckley**. The state of Ohio is where Northwestern did their most damage, however, signing a pair of four-star prospects in Centerville defensive end **Ifeadi Odenigbo** and Cleveland defensive tackle **Greg Kuhar**. With 21 total signatures on Signing Day, the Wildcats added both depth and talent to future rosters. They started their 2012 class with the commitment of Joliet (Ill.) Catholic running back **Malin Jones** (6-2, 190) during the fall of his junior year. Jones has the potential to see the field early and often in his career in Evanston.

Headliner: Odenigbo was attracted to Northwestern because of its academics. Pat Fitzgerald was attracted to the 6-4, 220-pound Odenigbo because he is a freak athlete.

Sleeper: Lancaster, Pa., offensive lineman **Adam DePietro** (6-5, 270) could play guard or tackle in college and has outstanding technique for a young offensive lineman.

Bottom Line: Head coach Pat Fitzgerald is notoriously condescending about the star rating system in recruiting, and he reiterated that point in his National Signing Day press conference in February. Ironically, Northwestern finished 2012 with one of its highest rated classes during his tenure, bolstered by the signing of the two four-star defensive linemen from the state of Ohio.

Wisconsin

Overview: Four-star linebacker **Vince Biegel** and four-star offensive guard **Dan Voltz** are two of the best at their positions in the entire country, but overall the Badgers finished poorly

after a strong start to the class back in the spring. They lost two four-star offensive tackles in the final weeks to Rutgers and Ohio State, though the addition of three-star Indiana offensive tackle **Jake Meador** on National Signing Day does alleviate some of the sting from those departures from the class. When the dust settled, Wisconsin had only signed 12 prospects, and they missed out on meeting several needs in the class. Besides Voltz and Biegel, California quarterback **Bart Houston** and Kenosha, Wis., running back **Vonte Jackson** add some star power to the small class.

Headliner: In-state linebacker **Vince Biegel** (6-3, 210) should be leading the Badger's defense for a number of years.

Sleeper: Running back **Leo Musso** rushed for 5,348 yards and 87 touchdowns in his high school career. The 5-10, 190-pound prospect could contribute early in his career as a return specialist.

Bottom Line: In a year when Wisconsin won the inaugural Big Ten Championship Game, the Badger's low recruiting finish in the conference for 2012 is disappointing. This was never going to be a big class because they had limited scholarships available, but the loss of six assistant coaches following the 2011 season killed the recruiting momentum they had built early in the process.

Minnesota

Overview: The Gophers cleaned up in their own backyard, where they landed seven of the top nine prospects in the state of Minnesota. Heralded Mankato West quarterback **Phillip Nelson** was the big prize in-state, but they complement him with the No. 3-ranked in-state prospect, wide receiver **Andre McDonald**, who recommitted to the Gophers days before Signing Day after spending a few months on Vanderbilt's commitment list. They outdueled the likes of Auburn, Michigan and Ohio State to keep 6-9, 295-pound offensive tackle **Jonah Pirsig** in-state, and went into the state of Texas to sign five prospects to complement their in-state haul.

Headliner: Nelson is a cool customer under center and could see playing time early in his career. The 6-2, 225-pound signal caller threw for 2,439 yards and 43 touchdowns during his senior season, and rushed for an additional 669 yards.

Sleeper: Having just turned 17 years old shortly before he signed his letter of intent, athlete **Duke Anyanwu** should still be a junior in high school. Instead, he will be partaking in a college camp this summer.

Bottom Line: Jerry Kill's staff met a lot of their outstanding needs in 2012 by signing a large class of 27 players. The class does not have any four-star or five-star talents in the group, but 19 of the 27 signed are rated three stars, so what the Gophers lack in flash, they make up for in substance.

Illinois

Overview: Tim Beckman tapped into his contacts throughout the Midwest to help him finish out Illinois' class after leaving Toledo in December to take over the Illini's head coaching position. Twelve of the 19 players signed by Illinois committed to the program after Beckman took over as head coach, and eight of those hailed from the states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. Several of those late additions came from talent-rich programs in the state of Ohio, including Cleveland Glenville defensive back **V'Angelo Bentley** and Cleveland St. Ignatius linebacker **Mike Svetina**.

Headliner: Florida running back **Dami Ayoola** turned down offers from more than a dozen schools to sign with Illinois.

Sleeper: While Ayoola will get most of the fanfare coming in, do not be surprised if Detroit's **Devin Church** turns out to be the best running back in this class.

Bottom Line: Surprisingly, Beckman left the group of prospects that had committed to his staff at Toledo before his departure alone, even though there were several on that list who could have helped out the Illini. Whether that was due to an agreement he had with the Toledo administration or just a move of his own undertaking, it shows Beckman has his eyes on long-term in Champaign. Poaching prospects from Toledo's commitment list could have helped his program in the short run, but his approach should serve to enhance his reputation among Midwest high school coaches.

Indiana

Overview: Although 2012 will be most remembered as the year in which Indiana had a commitment from five-star quarterback Gunner Kiel before the in-state signal caller opted to take his talents elsewhere, Kevin Wilson's first full class in Bloomington is still a large group of 25 signees that can address a lot of needs on the roster. The Hoosiers did a great job adding depth at the defensive line positions, but also signed two quarterbacks in California three-star **Nathan Sudfeld** and junior college transfer **Cameron Coffman** to ease the pain of losing the nation's top ranked pro-style passer.

Headliner: Oak Forest, Ill., running back **Tevin Coleman** was a big pickup late in the recruiting process for the Hoosiers and is the highest ranked prospect in their 2012 class.

Sleeper: Tight end **Jason Spriggs** (6-7, 265) has the frame to grow into a left tackle in college.

Bottom Line: After spending the previous nine seasons at Oklahoma, Wilson knows how to recruit the elite prospects in the country. Just getting an early commitment from the nation's top-ranked pro-style quarterback shows Wilson has the ability to do that in Bloomington, even if Kiel did not ultimately sign with the Hoosiers. Indiana will need to show recruits they can win ball games before bringing in top talent, but Wilson's initial full class at Indiana showed the potential his staff has as recruiters.

Notre Dame

Overview: The class Notre Dame signed on Feb. 1 was far different from the one it looked as if they would sign a few weeks before. The Irish were in on a number of big recruitments late, but failed to connect on any in the final weeks of the process. Then, the big disappointment happened on National Signing Day when Rivals 100 wide receiver Deontay Greenberry of California shockingly sent his letter of intent to Houston after being committed to the Irish for the previous eight months. They finished with the nation's No. 20 ranked class.

Headliner: The quarterback position is one you have to get right to have success, and the Notre Dame-**Gunner Kiel** match up looks like a great fit. It also helps that he enrolled mid-year and practiced with the Irish in the spring.

Sleeper: College coaches have been raving about Texas athlete **Nicky Baratti** (6-2, 215) since his junior year.

Bottom Line: Notre Dame's class has several big-time talents in it, but finishes with just 17 total signees. Notre Dame is one of the few schools that can effectively recruit nationally, but signing just five prospects from the Midwest is not a long-term recipe for success. You have to develop a go-to region from where you build your class, and with 17 players hailing from 14 different states, the Irish were just too eclectic in 2012 to make a run at a Top 10 class.

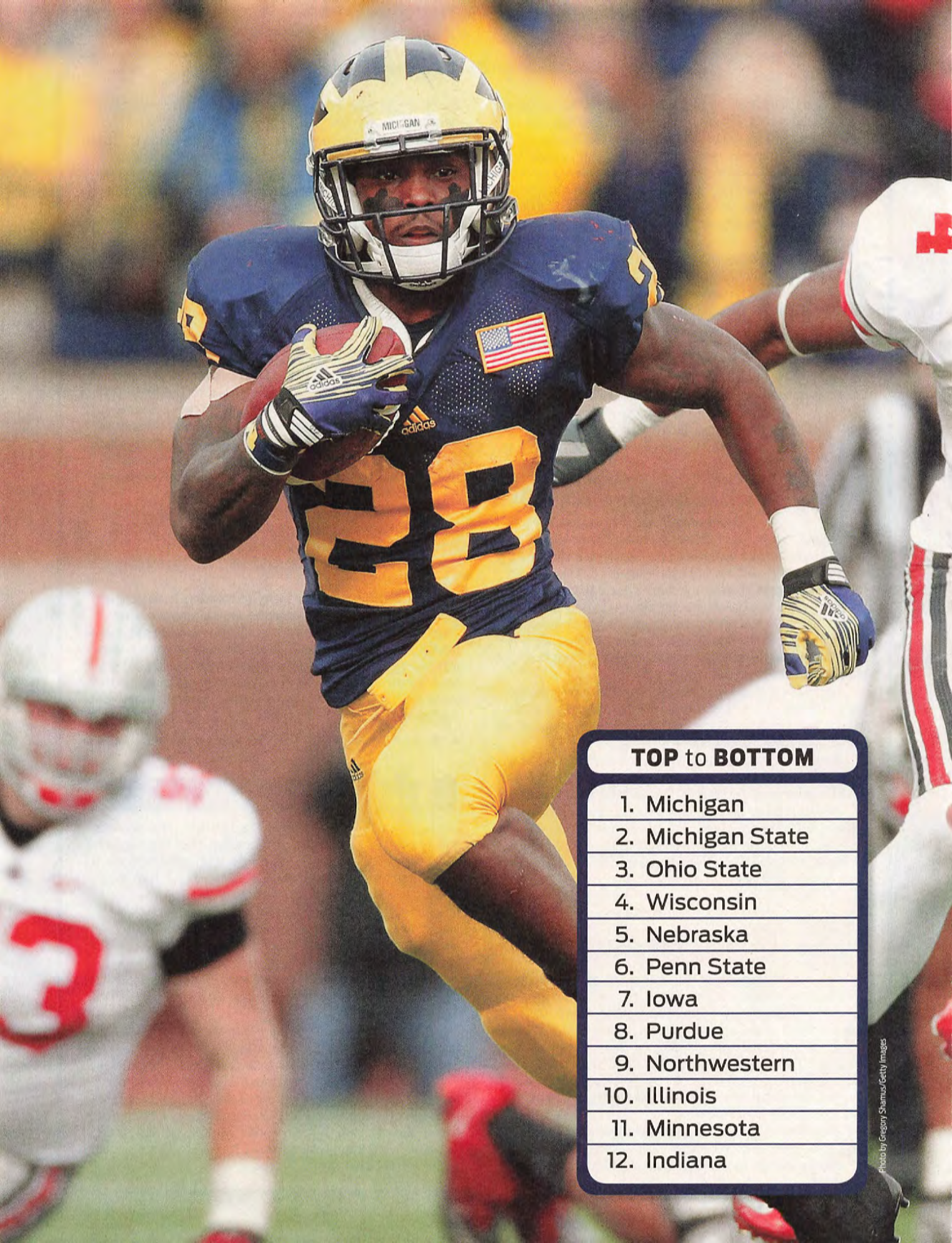


Photo by Gregory Shamus/Getty Images

TOP to **BOTTOM**

1. Michigan
2. Michigan State
3. Ohio State
4. Wisconsin
5. Nebraska
6. Penn State
7. Iowa
8. Purdue
9. Northwestern
10. Illinois
11. Minnesota
12. Indiana

PICKING **THE BIG TEN**

While Buckeyes Build, Big Blue is Back on Top

You have to feel for Michigan. Entering a season in which most see the maize and blue as the Big Ten's team to beat, that darn school due south somehow managed to steal most of the offseason headlines.

The conference is abuzz over the hiring of Urban Meyer, whose mission is to clean up and rebuild Ohio State into a perennial powerhouse.

No one questions whether Meyer can do it, or even that he will do it; it's just a matter of how long it will take. Perhaps Meyer could steal a few pointers from his new archrival, Brady Hoke, who turned Michigan's mess into a BCS qualifier in just one season.

Outsiders may have marveled at Hoke's work, but not Big Ten coaches.

"I've been part of this conference for 20 years," Iowa's Kirk Ferentz told *Lindy's*, "and one constant is that you can never count Michigan or Ohio State out for long."

The Wolverines' 1-2 punch of quarterback Denard Robinson and running back Fitzgerald Toussaint leads a roster full of promise.

The school's season-opener against Alabama will serve as an indicator for whether Hoke's squad is ready to take the next step, but the more important test will come weeks later when the Wolverines entertain in-state rival (and leading conference challenger) Michigan State.

In Columbus, Meyer has few pieces to play with in year one. The offensive line must be reshaped to fit his wide-open approach, and Braxton Miller must become more consistent under center. On defense, the secondary is deep but inexperienced.

Again, no one doubts that the man who won two national titles while at Florida is up to the challenge.

"What he's done speaks for itself," says Minnesota's Jerry Kill. "(His arrival) only makes our conference tougher."

No matter how well the Buckeyes fare, it's kind of a lost season; the team is ineligible for postseason play, including the Big Ten title game in Indianapolis. That leaves the door open for Wisconsin to return to Lucas Oil Stadium.

First, the Badgers must replace three offensive linemen and retool the second-

Big Ten Picks

LEGENDS	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. Michigan	Brady Hoke was the right man at the right time to lead Michigan.	The regular season begins with Alabama and ends at Ohio State.	Oh, forget the bad news; we're in love with the Wolverines!
2. Michigan State	MSU lost Jerel Worthy and still has the best D in the Big Ten.	Filling holes on offense, specifically in the passing game, will not be easy.	The season will come down to the Oct. 20 trip to Ann Arbor — the way it should be.
3. Nebraska	Rex Burkhead, Taylor Martinez are a formidable pair on the ground.	The Cornhusker defense lost elite talent at each tier.	It will be another good season for the Huskers; not great, but good.
4. Iowa	James Vandenberg and the passing game will be much better than what's expected.	A little house cleaning has left the cupboards a bit bare.	Kirk Ferentz is still one of the Big Ten's best coaches, no matter how things look in 2012.
5. Northwestern	The passing game has the potential to rank among the conference's best..	Only one starter returns to a secondary that ranked last in passing yards allowed.	With Pat Fitzgerald at the helm, NU is always prepared to spoil someone's season..
6. Minnesota	The Minnesota Legislature approved a plan to allow the sale of beer on game days.	Gophers need something in the stands to distract fans from the action on the field.	Life could be worse (ok, not much).
LEADERS			
1. Ohio State	The Buckeyes replaced one legendary coach with another (Urban Meyer).	No matter how quickly Meyer cleans up Columbus, OSU is still ineligible for 2012.	Expect big steps for the Buckeyes in Year One of the Meyer era.
2. Wisconsin	As usual, the mammoth ground attack is reloaded and ready for more yards.	Transfer QB Danny O'Brien might not be Russell Wilson.	A return trip to Indianapolis is in the cards, but as a whole, UW will take a step back.
3. Penn State	There is plenty of talent on the roster; neither Michigan school is on the schedule.	Scandal still looms over University Park; the program could take years to heal.	The middle of the pack won't satisfy anxious Nittany Lions fans, but it will have to do.
4. Purdue	All-World DT Kawann Short skipped a handsome payday to return to West Lafayette.	The QB crop hardly lives up to the school's "Cradle" reputation.	An encouraging start will be crushed by the Boilermakers' deadly October schedule.
5. Illinois	The defensive front seven boasts several outstanding players.	New coach Tim Beckman watched four former Illini players get drafted in April.	Despite how things appear, Illinois is closer to the middle than the bottom.
6. Indiana	The Hoosiers could sweep their four non-conference opponents.	Last we checked, a team needs at least six wins to become bowl eligible.	Kevin Wilson refused to make bold predictions this offseason, for good reason.

ary, but that's hardly a worry. What fans are concerned about is quarterback; 2011 starter Russell Wilson transformed the grind-it-out offense into a multi-dimensional attack; 2012 transfer Danny O'Brien has yet to take a snap for the red and white.

The team Wisconsin beat in last year's title game is desperate to return.

"Having been there, it was even more exciting than we could have imagined," said Michigan State's Mark Dantonio.

His club will rely on an outstanding defense, highlighted by a fierce pass rush and a trio of linebackers — Max Bullough, Denicos Allen and Chris Norman — that rates among the best in the country. The Spartans must weather several tests before their showdown in Ann Arbor.

Can Nebraska and Penn State play spoiler? Only if both clubs' offensive and defensive lines come together in time. Same goes for Iowa and Northwestern — both schools are well coached, but lacking in firepower.

Of course, it's foolish to count out any squad in this conference.

"Any team can rise to the top in this conference," Dantonio said.

— Mike Beacom

Most Valuable Player

Denard Robinson
QB, Michigan

Offensive Player of the Year

Montee Ball
RB, Wisconsin

Defensive Player of the Year

Kawann Short
DT, Purdue

Newcomer of the Year

Kyle Prater
WR, Northwestern

HONOR ROLL

Most Accurate Passer	Nathan Scheelhaase	Illinois
Strongest Arm	James Vandenberg	Iowa
Best Scrambler	Denard Robinson	Michigan
Coolest in the Clutch	Denard Robinson	Michigan
Toughest to Bring Down	Le'Veon Bell	Michigan State
Best Hands	Jared Abbrederis	Wisconsin
Most Dangerous Deep Threat	Roy Roundtree	Michigan
Best Pass Blocker	Chris McDonald	Michigan State
Best Run Blocker	Travis Frederick	Wisconsin
Best Pass Rusher	Denicos Allen	Michigan State
Best Cover Corner	Johnny Adams	Michigan State
Special Teams Demon	Ameer Abdullah	Nebraska

Lindy's 2012 ALL-BIG TEN Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM

QB	Denard Robinson	Sr.	Michigan
RB	Montee Ball	Sr.	Wisconsin
RB	Fitzgerald Toussaint	Jr.	Michigan
WR	Jared Abbrederis	Jr.	Wisconsin
WR	Keenan Davis	Sr.	Iowa
TE	Jacob Pedersen	Jr.	Wisconsin
C	Travis Frederick	Jr.	Wisconsin
OL	Ricky Wagner	Sr.	Wisconsin
OL	Chris McDonald	Sr.	Michigan State
OL	Taylor Lewan	Jr.	Michigan
OL	Spencer Long	Jr.	Nebraska
K	Brett Maher	Sr.	Nebraska
AP	Ameer Abdullah	So.	Nebraska

OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM

QB	Braxton Miller	So.	Ohio State
RB	Rex Burkhead	Sr.	Nebraska
RB	Silas Redd	Jr.	Penn State
WR	Roy Roundtree	Sr.	Michigan
WR	Demetrius Fields	Sr.	Northwestern
TE	Jake Stoneburner	Sr.	Ohio State
C	James Ferentz	Sr.	Iowa
OL	Jack Mewhort	Jr.	Ohio State
OL	Brian Mulroe	Sr.	Northwestern
OL	Graham Pocic	Sr.	Illinois
OL	Fou Fonoti	Sr.	Michigan State
K	Drew Basil	Jr.	Ohio State
AP	Jared Abbrederis	Jr.	Wisconsin

OFFENSE - THIRD TEAM

QB	Taylor Martinez	Jr.	Nebraska
RB	Le'Veon Bell	Jr.	Michigan State
RB	Stephen Houston	Jr.	Indiana
WR	Antavian Edison	Sr.	Purdue
WR	Justin Brown	Sr.	Penn State
TE	Ben Cotton	Sr.	Nebraska
C	Matt Stankiewitch	Sr.	Penn State
OL	Ricky Barnum	Sr.	Michigan
OL	Will Matte	Sr.	Indiana
OL	Brandon Scherff	So.	Iowa
OL	Reid Fragel	Sr.	Ohio State
K	Anthony Fera	Jr.	Penn State
AP	Jordan Hall	Sr.	Ohio State

DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM

DL	Kawann Short	Sr.	Purdue
DL	William Gholston	Jr.	Michigan State
DL	John Simon	Sr.	Ohio State
DL	Johnathan Hankins	Jr.	Ohio State
LB	Gerald Hodges	Sr.	Penn State
LB	Chris Borland	Jr.	Wisconsin
LB	Jonathan Brown	Jr.	Illinois
DB	Johnny Adams	Sr.	Michigan State
DB	Micah Hyde	Sr.	Iowa
DB	C.J. Barnett	Jr.	Ohio State
DB	Ricardo Allen	Jr.	Purdue
P	Brett Maher	Sr.	Nebraska

DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM

DL	Jordan Hill	Sr.	Penn State
DL	Michael Buchanan	Sr.	Illinois
DL	Marcus Rush	So.	Michigan State
DL	Baker Steinkuhler	Sr.	Nebraska
LB	Mike Taylor	Sr.	Wisconsin
LB	James Morris	Jr.	Iowa
LB	Denicos Allen	Jr.	Michigan State
DB	Isaiah Lewis	Jr.	Michigan State
DB	Jordan Kovacs	Sr.	Michigan
DB	J.T. Floyd	Sr.	Michigan
DB	Travis Howard	Sr.	Ohio State
P	Anthony Fera	Jr.	Penn State

DEFENSE - THIRD TEAM

DL	Craig Roh	Sr.	Michigan
DL	Akeem Spence	Jr.	Illinois
DL	Steven Bigach	Sr.	Iowa
DL	Beau Allen	Jr.	Wisconsin
LB	Max Bullough	Jr.	Michigan State
LB	Ryan Shazier	So.	Ohio State
LB	Michael Mauti	Sr.	Penn State
DB	Daimion Stafford	Sr.	Nebraska
DB	Terry Hawthorne	Sr.	Illinois
DB	Ibraheim Campbell	So.	Northwestern
DB	Devin Smith	Sr.	Wisconsin
P	Cody Webster	Jr.	Purdue

THE **BIG** ONES

Aug. 31	
Boise State at Michigan State	Two national powerhouses, each breaking in a new QB.
Sept. 1	
Michigan vs. Alabama (Arlington, TX)	Just a little season-opener that will influence the national title chase.
Sept. 8	
Iowa State at Iowa	It took three overtimes to decide this intra-state affair last season.
Nebraska at UCLA	Bruins last faced a Big Ten foe in the regular season in 2004 (Illinois).
Sept. 15	
Boston College at Northwestern	QB Kain Colter did it all in beating BC last season.
Notre Dame at Michigan State	The home team has won the last four games in this series.
Cal at Ohio State	Challenging game for the guys coached by Urban Meyer.
Sept. 22	
Michigan at Notre Dame	A college football classic (and maybe meaningful, too).
Sept. 29	
Ohio State at Michigan State	Last year, the Spartans nearly kept OSU scoreless.
Wisconsin at Nebraska	Huskers embarrassed themselves in Madison last year. Revenge?
Oct. 6	
Northwestern at Penn State	The Wildcats have dropped five straight to the Nittany Lions.
Nebraska at Ohio State	OSU hopes to atone for 27-6 lead it coughed up in Lincoln last year.
Oct. 13	
Iowa at Michigan State	The Hawkeyes' chance to climb into the Legends race.
Oct. 20	
Michigan State at Michigan	Wolverines trying to reclaim the state in this huge game.
Minnesota at Wisconsin	Badgers have toted Paul Bunyan's Axe in 15 of past 17 meetings.
Oct. 27	
Michigan State at Wisconsin	Picking up the series after two great games last season.
Michigan at Nebraska	After playing Michigan State, Michigan can't afford letdown.
Ohio State at Penn State	A game pitting two programs desperate to return to prominence.
Nov. 3	
Nebraska at Michigan State	Last year, Huskers ruined Spartans' bid for a perfect league mark.
Nov. 10	
Penn State at Nebraska	Not Osborne and Paterno ... but Pelini and O'Brien will do.
Northwestern at Michigan	A 28-point second half helped Michigan to victory last year.
Nov. 17	
Ohio State at Wisconsin	Urban Meyer, Bret Bielema brushing aside talk about hard feelings.
Nov. 23	
Nebraska at Iowa	Two lunch-bucket teams going to battle the day after Thanksgiving.
Nov. 24	
Michigan at Ohio State	OSU playing spoiler for Michigan's big postseason plans?
Dec. 1	
Big Ten Championship Game	If our predictions hold, Michigan vying for first Rose Bowl since '06 season.

WILLIAM GHOLSTON

Photo by Joe Robbins

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Big Ten Champion BCS (National title game if ranked #1 or #2, otherwise Rose)

Big Ten #2	Capital One Bowl vs. SEC
Big Ten #3	Outback Bowl vs. SEC
Big Ten #4	Insight Bowl vs. Big 12
Big Ten #5	TaxSlayer.com Gator Bowl vs. SEC
Big Ten #6	Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas vs. Big 12
Big Ten #7	TicketCity Bowl vs. Conference USA
Big Ten #8	Little Caesars Pizza Bowl vs. MAC

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Johnathan Hankins	DL	Jr.	Ohio State	Has the bulk (320-plus) to clog up the middle.
2. Montee Ball	RB	Sr.	Wisconsin	Possesses the right qualities (vision, patience, toughness).
3. William Gholston	DE/OLB	Jr.	Michigan State	Athletic rusher whose only hang-up will be "character issues."
4. Kawann Short	DT	Sr.	Purdue	Has the size to line up inside and the quickness to create pressure.
5. Johnny Adams	CB	Sr.	Michigan State	Could snap MSU's decade-long first-round drought.
6. Ricky Wagner	OT	Sr.	Wisconsin	Just another in UW's long list of first round OL prospects.
7. John Simon	DE	Sr.	Ohio State	Doesn't have eye-popping measurables, but strong, productive.
8. Taylor Lewan	OT	Jr.	Michigan	Should receive more attention this year with Michigan on the rise.
9. Travis Frederick	C/OG	Jr.	Wisconsin	NFL teams will appreciate his versatility.
10. Jordan Hill	DL	Sr.	Penn State	Lacks ideal size, but plays with leverage and makes plays.

New Coaches Embrace Traditions

One of the tasks a first-year Big Ten coach must get a handle on is how to take care of his program's traditions during a transitional phase.

When Tim Beckman accepted Illinois' head coaching job last December, he started reaching out to three or four former players a day to introduce himself and remind the alums of their importance to the program.

Former players served as the head coaches and coordinators for spring ball, and Beckman established the first-ever Illini golf outing in the spring. Despite poor weather, more than 90 players attended the event, which was followed by a barbeque.

And this fall, Illinois will unveil a new room in the northwest corner of the end zone where former players can gather and become more connected with the program.

"We're reaching out because this program is about them," Beckman told *Lindy's*. "It's about the strength of the tradition we have here."

Last year, Minnesota's Jerry Kill was sensitive to the same needs of his program. Kill spent time in each practice during the team's two-a-day camp educating players about the important traditions and rivalry games tied to Gopher football.

"It's history. We talk it about it all the time," Kill said. "That's the great privilege of playing in the Big Ten — you get these opportunities not every school gets."

Pros aren't always clear as preps

Since 2000, no Big Ten team has placed as many players at the next level as Ohio State. In fact, no team is close. During that time, a total of 70 Buckeyes have been picked among the draft's seven rounds.

The next closest conference school is Iowa (48), followed by Wisconsin and Nebraska (45 each).

Fans may link Ohio State's success in April to the team's ability to land top, five-star recruits each year in February, but often there is no correlation.

"It's always interesting to see how many of (the top picks) were three-star recruits," said Indiana's Kevin Wilson.

He points to the fact that a pair of former three-star players he coached at the University of Oklahoma were among the first four picks of the 2010 NFL Draft (quarterback Sam Bradford and tackle Trent Williams).

"I think they made $138 million in contracts that year," Wilson said.

Ranking the Schedules

Which team got the worst deal from the schedule-makers? Here's a look at the schedules for the Big Ten schools, starting with the team that has it the hardest this season.

FOUR-YEAR STANDINGS

Team	Record	Pct.	All	Pct.	Ch	M	B	Comment
Ohio State	24-8	.750	40-12	.769	3/0	3	4	Five Big Ten losses in '11 matched six-year total.
Michigan State	24-8	.750	37-16	.698	1/1	0	4	Past two years: 14-2 in Big Ten, 22-5 overall.
Penn State	23-9	.719	38-14	.731	1/0	1	4	New Lions hope some things haven't changed.
Wisconsin	21-11	.656	39-14	.736	2/1	2	4	Have 32 wins in the past three years.
Iowa	19-13	.594	35-17	.673	0/0	1	4	Hawkeyes have leveled off a bit.
Northwestern	16-16	.500	30-22	.577	0/0	0	4	Bowl after bowl after bowl after bowl.
Michigan	12-20	.375	26-24	.520	0/0	1	2	Win totals in last four years: 3, 5, 7, 11.
Purdue	12-20	.375	20-29	.408	0/0	0	1	First winning record in four years is encouraging.
Illinois	11-21	.344	22-28	.440	0/0	1	2	Thank goodness for soft non-league slates.
Minnesota	10-22	.312	19-31	.380	0/0	0	2	Successive 3-9 seasons are not encouraging.
Indiana	3-29	.094	13-35	.271	0/0	0	0	Hoosiers have hit rock bottom again.
*Nebraska	5-3	.625	38-16	.704	0/0	0	4	Solid start in the Big Ten.

***Only one season in Big Ten after moving from Big 12.**

1. Michigan — The Wolverines are the consensus pick to win the conference in 2012. That they don't have to face Wisconsin or Penn State helps, but consider that they open with Alabama, also face tricky Air Force and Notre Dame, and close at the Horseshoe.

2. Michigan State — Boise State and Notre Dame highlight a challenging non-conference slate; back-to-back October road trips to Ann Arbor and Madison could prove deadly.

3. Ohio State — Nothing too scary to start the year, but the Buckeyes have the most demanding Legends schedule of all the Leaders teams, starting with a trip to East Lansing; they miss Minnesota, Northwestern and Iowa.

4. Nebraska — Here is how the schedule-shapers welcomed the newcomers: For 2011 and 2012, the Cornhuskers don't have (or get) to play Indiana, Illinois and Purdue.

5. Illinois — The Illini fanbase must weather arguably the conference's toughest road schedule (Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio State and Northwestern).

6. Northwestern — September offers Syracuse and Boston College; November puts the Wildcats on the road against Michigan and Michigan State. And October is no picnic.

7. Purdue — The Boilermakers travel to South Bend before beginning Big Ten play with Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio State.

8. Iowa — Iowa fans know they cannot afford to overlook Iowa State and Northern Illinois, nor can they afford to be optimistic about trips to Ann Arbor and East Lansing.

9. Minnesota — No matter how hot the Gophers are to start the year, fans must know the end will not be pretty; November brings Michigan, Nebraska, and Michigan State.

10. Indiana — Home field advantage may not mean much, with Michigan State, Ohio State, Iowa and Wisconsin all planning to make stops in Bloomington this year. But they don't have to play Michigan or Nebraska.

11. Wisconsin — No standout non-conference games, no Michigan, and the Badgers' most challenging games (Michigan State, Ohio State) are at home.

12. Penn State — Somehow the Nittany Lions avoid both Michigan schools and manage to stay home for the Buckeyes and Badgers.

Filling some big shoes

Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network, who sees every conference team in spring ball, pegs former Michigan defensive tackle Mike Martin as one of the toughest players to replace among Big Ten squads.

"I don't often say that one guy makes that big of a difference, but I think in this case, Mike Martin makes that big of a difference," DiNardo told *Lindy's*.

"He constantly penetrated the line of scrimmage. He constantly forced zone schemes and double teams. Michigan didn't have that kind of guy up front in the spring. The back seven, on the other hand, is very talented and very good."

Martin went in the third round to the Tennessee Titans.

Gopher fans can gofer a beer

In April, Minnesota State Legislators approved a bill that allowed for the sale of alcohol at games played at TCF Bank Stadium.

No other Big Ten school allows the general sale of alcohol at sporting events (although several allow it in private suites), but that didn't deter Minnesota's House from passing the measure by an overwhelming margin, 115 to 13. Lawmakers estimate it could generate $1.5 million to $2 million in extra revenue per year for the school.

Originally, the plan was to make alcohol available in TCF suites; now everyone will be able to purchase it in the stadium's beer garden. The bill requires the stadium to sell products from at least one state brewery.

Supporters of the plan suggest that selling beer in the stadium could reduce tailgate binge drinking.

NFL Draft 2012

Somehow, no player in the Big Ten Conference last year was deemed to be worthy of being among the first 22 players selected in the NFL Draft. That's the longest the entire league has had to sit around and wait.

But once the NFL started picking Big Ten players, it did so frequently. The conference had 41 players called in the seven rounds. That was second only to the SEC's 42.

Only four Big Ten players were picked in the first round, and two of them were from Illinois. Ron Zook, who was fired after the season, had developed a reputation as a great recruiter who didn't get enough out of his players. He had five first-round draft picks in his five years at Illinois.

- Dig this: Four of the first six Big Ten players selected were from Illinois, which means NFL talent scouts thought that the Illini had four players better than anybody who was available from Michigan, Ohio State, Nebraska or Michigan State.
- Impressively, seven teams had at least four players drafted, with Michigan State, Iowa and Wisconsin leading the way with six apiece.
- Ten teams had at least two players chosen, while Indiana and Minnesota were shut out.
- Ohio State, which had 13 first-round picks in the six drafts from 2004-2009, has now had just one in three years.
- First-round Big Ten selections:

22nd Riley Reiff, OT, Iowa, Detroit Lions

26th Whitney Mercilus, DE, Illinois, Houston Texans

27th Kevin Zeitler, OG, Wisconsin, Cincinnati Bengals

30th A.J. Jenkins, WR, Illinois, San Francisco 49ers

Four-Year Standings

From 2007 to 2010, Ohio State went 28-4 in the league, seven games better than second-place Penn State in that span. But the Buckeyes came back to the pack in this new four-year snapshot, posting a 3-5 league mark last season, while Michigan State replaced its 3-5 record in 2007 with a 7-1 league record in 2011 to pull into an overall tie.

RATING **THE BIG TEN**

QUARTERBACKS

1. MICHIGAN
2. OHIO STATE
3. NEBRASKA
4. IOWA
5. PENN STATE
6. WISCONSIN
7. ILLINOIS
8. MICHIGAN STATE
9. PURDUE
10. NORTHWESTERN
11. MINNESOTA
12. INDIANA

There's not a more explosive player in the Big Ten than Michigan's Denard Robinson. Last year, Robinson posted a pair of 300-yard passing days and racked up five 100-yard rushing efforts.

As one coach put it, Robinson's presence puts pressure on all 11 defenders on every play. Devin Gardner also saw action under center last year for Michigan and could share the field at times this season.

Ohio State's quarterback crop begins with super-sophomore Braxton Miller, who earned the respect of Big Ten coaches last year by throwing for 13 touchdowns and leading the team in rushing.

Says Indiana's Kevin Wilson, "For a freshman quarterback, I thought he handled himself well last year. I'm sure coach (Urban) Meyer and his staff will do a great job with him."

Nebraska's Taylor Martinez is another fleet-footed Big Ten quarterback for teams to worry about. He's averaged 5.2 yards per carry with 21 rushing touchdowns in his two seasons in the lineup. Last year, Martinez improved his touchdown-to-interception ratio and is expected to make more strides in the passing game in Year Three.

After that, there is a lot of projection and hope for improvement among the league's quarterbacks.

RUNNING BACKS

1. WISCONSIN
2. MICHIGAN
3. NEBRASKA
4. MICHIGAN STATE
5. OHIO STATE
6. PENN STATE
7. PURDUE
8. NORTHWESTERN
9. INDIANA
10. IOWA
11. ILLINOIS
12. MINNESOTA

Wisconsin fans are happy to see Montee Ball back in the saddle following his record-tying 2011 campaign (39 touchdowns). Ball can operate between the tackles and has the vision and patience to bounce runs outside. Elusive James White would be a No. 1 back for 90 percent of the country's programs; third-stringer Melvin Gordon carried 30 times for 159 yards in the spring game.

Many believe Michigan's Fitzgerald Toussaint is primed for a breakout season, and the Wolverines are loaded behind him.

The Cornhuskers possess a workhorse in Rex Burkhead, who does just about everything. "Catches the ball well, downhill runner, has speed to catch the edge and the power to break tackles," Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio told *Lindy's*. "To stop Nebraska there are a couple guys you need to stop; he's the main one." Nebraska will employ sophomore Ameer Abdullah in a change-of-pace role.

The Spartans will miss Edwin Baker — a little. Le'Veon Bell is ready to take over full-time duties after averaging over 5.0 yards per carry in each of his first two seasons. In terms of depth, Larry Caper has seen action in each of his three years at East Lansing.

WIDE RECEIVERS

1. IOWA
2. WISCONSIN
3. OHIO STATE
4. MICHIGAN
5. NEBRASKA
6. MICHIGAN STATE
7. PURDUE
8. PENN STATE
9. NORTHWESTERN
10. INDIANA
11. MINNESOTA
12. ILLINOIS

This isn't a position of strength for the Big Ten this season, with Iowa's 6-3 Keenan Davis being perhaps the league's best receiver. Davis was limited by an ankle injury last season, but still hauled in 50 passes, including 10 against Pittsburgh.

Iowa's Kevonte Martin-Manley will be asked to help replace Marvin McNutt's production in the lineup; tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz (16 catches in 2011) should flourish this season and upgrades the Hawkeyes' pass-catching unit.

The Badgers are banking on possession receiver Jared Abbrederis and tight end Jacob Pedersen to make their passing game go. Abbrederis is the Big Ten's top returning receiver from 2011 with 55 catches for 933 yards. Pedersen led all conference tight ends with eight touchdowns.

Look for Ohio State's Jake Stoneburner to challenge Pedersen as the Big Ten's best pass-catching tight end. He had an outstanding spring and could thrive in Urban Meyer's spread offense. Devin Smith averaged 21.0 yards per reception last year — albeit in limited action — and is one of several young receivers ready to take off. True freshman Michael Thomas led all receivers in the spring game with 12 catches for 131 yards.

Michigan is hoping senior Roy Roundtree can return to being the player who caught 72 passes, including seven touchdowns, as a sophomore.

OFFENSIVE LINE

1. WISCONSIN
2. MICHIGAN STATE
3. OHIO STATE
4. MICHIGAN
5. PENN STATE
6. NEBRASKA
7. IOWA
8. ILLINOIS
9. NORTHWESTERN
10. INDIANA
11. MINNESOTA
12. PURDUE

It's business as usual for Wisconsin. Even though UW lost Kevin Zeitler and Peter Konz (both top 55 picks in the 2012 NFL Draft) the front line is once again loaded. Ricky Wagner is among the best tackles in the country, while 328-pound Travis Frederick can play guard or center.

"Big, strong and physical," Minnesota coach Jerry Kill said of the Badgers' line. "It's been their makeup since coach (Barry) Alvarez was there and it hasn't changed."

Michigan State is banking on its front line to keep new starting quarterback Andrew Maxwell upright. With tackles Dan France and Fou Fonoti, center Travis Jackson and all-conference guard Chris McDonald, the Spartans have one of the most experienced units in the Big Ten.

Ohio State lost two big bodies — Mike Brewster and Mike Adams — and remolded the line to fit the new scheme. By the end of spring, Urban Meyer was encouraged by the results. Jack Mewhort is the veteran, while Reid Fragel — a former tight end — is the project, having made the move to the right tackle spot.

The Wolverines return some key pieces, including projected bookends Taylor Lewan and Michael Schofield.

Spartans, Buckeyes Pace Strong Big Ten Defenses

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. MICHIGAN STATE
2. OHIO STATE
3. ILLINOIS
4. PENN STATE
5. PURDUE
6. WISCONSIN
7. MICHIGAN
8. NEBRASKA
9. IOWA
10. NORTHWESTERN
11. MINNESOTA
12. INDIANA

Hard to imagine, but Michigan State lost the conference's best lineman (Jerel Worthy) and *still* has the best group. How? With the help of William Gholston, for starters. Gholston is an athletic end who might make the switch to outside linebacker at the next level. Anthony Rashad White, Tyler Hoover and James Kittredge bring bulk to the interior, while opposite end Marcus Rush will help Gholston bring pressure to opposing backfields.

"They don't have just one guy that makes the unit," said Indiana's Kevin Wilson. "They understand their package; they're physical; they run well; they have some size ... collectively, they play good team defense."

All four Ohio State starters return to a unit that was stout against the run last year. John Simon is a defensive MVP candidate. Said Urban Meyer of his end: "He's a next-level type player: leader, character, toughness, commitment. He's elite, elite." Many also project defensive tackle Johnathan Hankins as a "next-level type player."

The Illini continue to churn out NFL talent (Whitney Mercilus last year) and have two more prospects in Akeem Spence and 2011 all-conference pick Michael Buchanan.

Jordan Hill will lead a Penn State defensive front that lost Jack Crawford and Devon Still.

LINEBACKERS

1. WISCONSIN
2. PENN STATE
3. MICHIGAN STATE
4. OHIO STATE
5. MICHIGAN
6. NEBRASKA
7. ILLINOIS
8. IOWA
9. NORTHWESTERN
10. PURDUE
11. MINNESOTA
12. INDIANA

The Big Ten has more talent at linebacker than any other position, beginning with Wisconsin. The Badgers return two of the conference's top five tacklers from last year — Mike Taylor and Chris Borland — both of whom averaged more than 10 tackles per game and found their way onto the media's all-conference first team.

Penn State's program will turn a page this season, but the campus is still worthy of being called Linebacker U. "I grew up in that part of the country," said Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz, "and they've been good (at linebacker) since I've began watching football in the '60s."

Many believe the Nittany Lions' Gerald Hodges is the best linebacker in the conference. Senior Michael Mauti is trying to come back from another serious knee injury.

Michigan State is very good across the board. Outside linebacker Denicos Allen notched 11 sacks last season; Chris Norman has a wealth of experience; Max Bullough controls the middle of the field as well as any Big Ten linebacker.

Ohio State's Ryan Shazier may carry the most promise of any conference linebacker after an encouraging 2011 debut. Etienne Sabino returns to offer Shazier support at the opposite outside spot.

SECONDARY

1. MICHIGAN STATE
2. OHIO STATE
3. MICHIGAN
4. IOWA
5. WISCONSIN
6. PENN STATE
7. NEBRASKA
8. PURDUE
9. NORTHWESTERN
10. ILLINOIS
11. MINNESOTA
12. INDIANA

Seeing a pattern here? Michigan State compares favorably to the rest of the conference at all three tiers on defense.

The Spartans' secondary is probably where they separate from other programs the most. Cornerback Johnny Adams has first-round potential, but teams cannot afford to keep the ball away from him because sophomore Darqueze Dennard can make them pay on the other side. Safety Isaiah Lewis (four interceptions last season, two returned for touchdowns) helps complete the package.

The Buckeyes are plenty deep at defensive back (the coaching staff believes the second unit may be as talented as the first). Cornerbacks Travis Howard, Bradley Roby and Doran Grant — and safeties C.J. Barnett, Christian Bryant and Orhian Johnson — will provide leadership and production.

The Wolverines return a wealth of experience to a unit that allowed just 12 touchdown passes last season, tied with Penn State for fewest in the conference. Led by safety Jordan Kovacs and cornerback J.T. Floyd, the secondary should help buy Michigan's unproven front a little extra time on passing downs.

Iowa's secondary has thinned out in recent years, but Micah Hyde (11 passes defended), and Tanner Miller should continue the tradition of playmaking Hawkeye defensive backs.

SPECIAL TEAMS

1. NEBRASKA
2. PENN STATE
3. MICHIGAN STATE
4. OHIO STATE
5. WISCONSIN
6. NORTHWESTERN
7. MICHIGAN
8. PURDUE
9. INDIANA
10. IOWA
11. ILLINOIS
12. MINNESOTA

The Cornhuskers own the conference's top punter and kicker in the same player — senior Brett Maher. He was the only kicker to reach the 100-point mark last season (19 of 23 on field-goal attempts), and he averaged a conference-best 44.5 yards on punts. Ameer Abdullah could be the Big Ten's most dangerous return man; he averaged 29.4 yards on kicks last year, and returned one for a touchdown.

Same as Nebraska, Penn State relies on the same leg in the kicking and punting game. Junior Anthony Fera fared almost as well as Maher, averaging 42.0 yards on his punts and converting 14 of 17 field-goal attempts. Return man Chaz Powell will be missed. Justin Brown, who had a 93-yard punt return called back in the TicketCity Bowl, could be the answer, assuming the offense does not demand all of his time.

Michigan State also lost its top return man (Keshawn Martin) but returns its kicker (Dan Conroy) and punter (Mike Sadler). The Spartans have a number of young skill players who will compete for Martin's old job.

Jordan Hall gives Ohio State a home run hitter on special teams and offense, perhaps serving the role Percy Harvin did for Urban Meyer at Florida.

BIG TEN YEAR IN REVIEW

THE RACE

The Big Ten — or should that just be the B1G? — muscled up before the 2011 season, importing Nebraska from the Big 12 and breaking into two six-team divisions that sent fans scrambling to find mnemonics to recall which teams were Legends and which were Leaders.

Let's start with the Legends, where Michigan State opened with a 10-7 win over Ohio State, came home to beat big brother Michigan for the fourth consecutive time, and then stunned fourth-ranked Wisconsin with a deflected 44-yard Hail Mary touchdown pass on the final play.

The Spartans coughed up a loss the following week at Nebraska, but they had done enough heavy lifting to clinch a berth in the inaugural Big Ten Championship Game by the second-to-last week of the regular season.

Over in the Leaders, the Tressel-less Ohio State Buckeyes floundered, Illinois faded, Indiana failed to win a conference game, and Purdue found middle ground. That left Wisconsin and Penn State to fight it out.

The Nittany Lions, dealing with the firing of Joe Paterno after the ninth game in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky scandal, entered the final-weekend matchup against the Badgers in Madison with a 6-1 league mark. The game wasn't close.

With the usual dose of Montee Ball (156 yards, four touchdowns), Wisconsin took a 28-7 halftime lead and coasted to a 45-7 victory, winning the division title via the tie-breaking head-to-head result with Penn State.

THE CHAMPION

Wisconsin, with one-year wonder Russell Wilson at quarterback and 39 touchdowns from running back Montee Ball, averaged a school-record 44.1 points a game. That's about the number the Badgers hit in the Big Ten Championship Game, avenging their regular-season loss to Michigan State with a 42-39 victory.

Wilson was the game's MVP and Ball scored four touchdowns (three rushing, one receiving) as Wisconsin grabbed a late lead, and was able to run out the clock after a Michigan State penalty for running into the punter.

The Badgers advanced to the Rose Bowl for the second consecutive season, where they came up just short again. The Badgers, who lost 21-19 to TCU after the 2010 regular season, couldn't corral Oregon's speed, succumbing, 45-38, in the highest-scoring Rose Bowl ever.

Wilson set the NCAA mark for single-season passing efficiency (191.78 rating).

THE STARS

Offensive Player of the Year: Montee Ball, RB, Wisconsin

The junior tied Barry Sanders' NCAA record for total touchdowns in a season, scoring 33 times on the ground and six on receptions. A Heisman Trophy finalist, Ball led the nation in total rushing yards (1,923) and was third in yards per game (137.4). He averaged 6.3 yards a carry.

Defensive Player of the Year: Devon Still, DL, Penn State

It's rare that a defensive tackle earns the top defensive honor in the Big Ten — only Penn State's Jared Odrick had done it since 1994 — but Still made it happen with 17 tackles for loss, a huge number for an interior lineman. He was a finalist for the Outland Trophy.

Coach of the Year: Brady Hoke, Michigan

This Michigan Man picked up the talented pieces left behind from Rich Rodriguez (not a Michigan Man). He tweaked the schemes back to something more recognizable to the Big Blue faithful and gave the team the energy boost it needed. The Wolverines won 10 games, went to the Sugar Bowl and, above all, ended a seven-game skid against Ohio State.

THE BOWLS

Wisconsin couldn't get it done in the Rose Bowl, as the Big Ten dropped to 1-8 in the Granddaddy since the 2001 game. (The Big Ten's only victory in that time came from Ohio State, over Oregon, after the 2009 regular season.) The Michigan schools' big bowl victories helped spark larger expectations for each for the 2012 season.

Rose	**Oregon 45, Wisconsin 38**
Sugar	**Michigan 23, Virginia Tech 20**
Gator	**Florida 24, Ohio State 17**
Outback	**Michigan State 33, Georgia 30**
TicketCity	**Houston 30, Penn State 14**
Meinke Car Care	**Texas A&M 33, Northwestern 22**
Kraft Fight Hunger	**Illinois 20, UCLA 14**
Insight	**Oklahoma 31, Iowa 14**
Little Caesars Pizza	**Purdue 37, Western Michigan 32**

ALL-BIG TEN TEAM

*as selected by the league coaches

OFFENSE - First Team

QB	Russell Wilson	Wisconsin
RB	Rex Burkhead	Nebraska
RB	Montee Ball	Wisconsin
WR	A.J. Jenkins	Illinois
WR	Marvin McNutt	Iowa
TE	Drake Dunsmore	Northwestern
C	David Molk	Michigan
OG	Joel Foreman	Michigan State
OG	Kevin Zeitler	Wisconsin
OT	Riley Reiff	Iowa
OT	Josh Oglesby	Wisconsin
PK	Brett Maher	Nebraska

OFFENSE - Second Team

QB	Kirk Cousins	Michigan State
RB	Marcus Coker	Iowa
RB	Silas Redd	Penn State
WR	B.J. Cunningham	Michigan State
WR	Nick Toon	Wisconsin
TE	Brian Linthicum	Michigan State
C	Mike Caputo	Nebraska
C	Mike Brewster	Ohio State
OG	Adam Gettis	Iowa
OG	Travis Frederick	Wisconsin
OT	Taylor Lewan	Michigan
OT	Mike Adams	Ohio State
PK	Carson Wiggs	Purdue

DEFENSE - First Team

DL	Whitney Mercilus	Illinois
DL	Jerel Worthy	Michigan State
DL	John Simon	Ohio State
DL	Devon Still	Penn State
LB	Lavonte David	Nebraska
LB	Gerald Hodges	Penn State
LB	Chris Borland	Wisconsin
DB	Shaun Prater	Iowa
DB	Johnny Adams	Michigan State
DB	Alfonzo Dennard	Nebraska
DB	Aaron Henry	Wisconsin
P	Brett Maher	Nebraska

DEFENSE - Second Team

DL	Michael Buchanan	Illinois
DL	Mike Daniels	Iowa
DL	Mike Martin	Michigan
DL	William Gholston	Michigan State
DL	Jack Crawford	Penn State
DL	Kawann Short	Purdue
LB	Max Bullough	Michigan State
LB	Andrew Sweat	Ohio State
LB	Mike Taylor	Wisconsin
DB	Isaiah Lewis	Michigan State
DB	C.J. Barnett	Ohio State
DB	Nick Sukay	Penn State
DB	Ricardo Allen	Purdue
P	Cody Webster	Purdue

THE STANDINGS

Legends Division	W-L	Pct.	PF	PA	W-L	Pct.	PF	PA
Michigan State	7-1	.875	232	141	11-3	.786	434	257
Michigan	6-2	.750	282	155	11-2	.846	433	226
Nebraska	5-3	.625	195	186	9-4	.692	379	304
Iowa	4-4	.500	193	184	7-6	.538	358	310
Northwestern	3-5	.375	246	262	6-7	.462	376	360
Minnesota	2-6	.250	130	273	3-9	.250	221	380

Leaders Division	W-L	Pct.	PF	PA	W-L	Pct.	PF	PA
Wisconsin	6-2	.750	344	148	11-3	.786	618	266
Penn State	6-2	.750	137	138	9-4	.692	251	218
Purdue	4-4	.500	195	231	7-6	.538	350	349
Ohio State	3-5	.375	189	186	6-7	.462	318	273
Illinois	2-6	.250	145	189	7-6	.538	294	255
Indiana	0-8	.000	147	342	1-11	.083	257	448

2011 BIG TEN LEADERS

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PASS EFFICIENCY	G	ATT	CMP	INT	PCT.	YDS	TD	EFF.
1. Russell Wilson, Wisconsin	14	309	225	4	72.8	3175	33	191.8
2. Dan Persa, Northwestern	10	297	218	7	73.4	2376	17	154.8
3. Kirk Cousins, Michigan State	14	419	267	10	63.7	3316	25	145.1
4. Denard Robinson, Michigan	13	258	142	15	55	2173	20	139.7
5. James Vandenberg, Iowa	13	404	237	7	58.7	3022	25	138.5
6. Braxton Miller, Ohio State	12	157	85	4	54.1	1159	13	138.4
7. Nathan Scheelhaase, Illinois	13	291	184	8	63.2	2110	13	133.4
8. Caleb TerBush, Purdue	13	277	171	6	61.7	1905	13	130.7
9. Taylor Martinez, Nebraska	13	288	162	8	56.2	2089	13	126.5
10. Matt McGloin, Penn State	12	231	125	5	54.1	1571	8	118.3

INTERCEPTIONS	G	NO.	YDS	TD	AVG/G	LONG
1. Brian Peters, Northwestern	13	5	26	0	24	0.38
2. Shelton Johnson, Wisconsin	13	4	0	0	0	0.31
3. Isaiah Lewis, Michigan State	14	4	89	2	39	0.29
Aaron Henry, Wisconsin	14	4	50	0	18	0.29
Trenton Robinson, Michigan State	14	4	40	0	34	0.29
Antonio Fenelus, Wisconsin	14	4	10	0	10	0.29
7. Darqueze Dennard, Michigan State	12	3	38	1	38	0.25
8. Tanner Miller, Iowa	13	3	114	1	98	0.23
Bradley Roby, Ohio State	13	3	57	0	36	0.23
Terry Hawthorne, Illinois	13	3	39	1	39	0.23

RUSHING	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Montee Ball, Wisconsin	14	307	1923	6.3	33	137.4
2. Marcus Coker, Iowa	12	281	1384	4.9	15	115.3
3. Rex Burkhead, Nebraska	13	283	1357	4.8	15	104.4
4. Silas Redd, Penn State	13	244	1241	5.1	7	95.5
5. Denard Robinson, Michigan	13	221	1176	5.3	16	90.5
6. MarQueis Gray, Minnesota	11	199	966	4.9	6	87.8
7. Fitzgerald Toussaint, Michigan	12	187	1041	5.6	9	86.8
8. Le'Veon Bell, Michigan State	14	182	948	5.2	13	67.7
9. Taylor Martinez, Nebraska	13	189	874	4.6	9	67.2
10. Stephen Houston, Indiana	12	151	802	5.3	8	66.8

SCORING	G	TD	XPT	FG	2XP	PTS	PTS/G
1. Montee Ball, Wisconsin	14	39	0	0	2	236	16.7
2. Rex Burkhead, Nebraska	13	17	0	0	0	102	7.8
3. Brett Maher, Nebraska	13	0	19	43	0	100	7.7
4. Marcus Coker, Iowa	12	15	0	0	0	90	7.5
5. Carson Wiggs, Purdue	13	0	19	39	0	96	7.4
Denard Robinson, Michigan	13	16	0	0	0	96	7.4
7. Brendan Gibbons, Michigan	13	0	13	54	0	93	7.2
8. Dan Conroy, Michigan State	14	0	17	48	0	99	7.1
9. Mike Meyer, Iowa	13	0	14	44	0	86	6.6
10. Drew Basil, Ohio State	13	0	16	36	0	84	6.5

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	RUSH	PASS	PLAYS	TOT	YDS/G
1. Denard Robinson, Michigan	13	1176	2173	479	3349	257.6
2. Russell Wilson, Wisconsin	14	338	3175	388	3513	250.9
3. Dan Persa, Northwestern	10	32	2376	376	2408	240.8
4. James Vandenberg, Iowa	13	61	3022	482	3083	237.2
5. Kirk Cousins, Michigan State	14	-39	3316	456	3277	234.1
6. Taylor Martinez, Nebraska	13	874	2089	477	2963	227.9
7. MarQueis Gray, Minnesota	11	966	1495	412	2461	223.7
8. Nathan Scheelhaase, Illinois	13	624	2110	482	2734	210.3
9. Caleb TerBush, Purdue	13	219	1905	360	2124	163.4
10. Braxton Miller, Ohio State	12	715	1159	316	1874	156.2

PUNTING	G	NO.	YDS	AVG	LG
1. Brett Maher, Nebraska	13	59	2626	69	44.5
2. Cody Webster, Purdue	13	45	1931	66	42.9
3. Brad Nortman, Wisconsin	14	46	1943	74	42.2
4. Anthony Fera, Penn State	12	64	2685	69	42.0
5. Ben Buchanan, Ohio State	13	70	2889	60	41.3
6. Eric Guthrie, Iowa	13	53	2182	59	41.2
7. Mike Sadler, Michigan State	13	61	2509	57	41.1
8. Brandon Williams, Northwestern	13	52	2119	77	40.8
9. Adam Pines, Indiana	12	71	2723	57	38.4
10. Justin DuVernois, Illinois	12	53	2029	66	38.3

RECEIVING YDS/GAME	G	REC	YDS	TD	YDS/G
1. Marvin McNutt, Iowa	13	82	1315	12	101.2
2. A.J. Jenkins, Illinois	13	90	1276	8	98.2
3. B.J. Cunningham, Michigan State	14	79	1306	12	93.3
4. Jeremy Ebert, Northwestern	13	75	1060	11	81.5
5. Nick Toon, Wisconsin	13	64	926	10	71.2
6. Jar Abbrederis, Wisconsin	14	55	933	8	66.6
7. DaJon McKnight, Minnesota	12	51	760	4	63.3
8. Derek Moye, Penn State	11	40	654	3	59.5
9. Keenan Davis, Iowa	12	50	713	4	59.4
10. Keshawn Martin, Michigan State	14	66	777	4	55.5

TEAM STATISTICS

TOTAL OFFENSE	G	PLAYS	YDS.	AVG/P	TD	YDS/G
1. Wisconsin	14	937	6578	7	82	469.9
2. Northwestern	13	984	5471	5.6	51	420.8
3. Michigan	13	844	5261	6.2	53	404.7
4. Michigan State	14	940	5466	5.8	47	390.4
5. Nebraska	13	904	4939	5.5	44	379.9
6. Purdue	13	926	4899	5.3	39	376.8
7. Iowa	13	866	4842	5.6	43	372.5
8. Indiana	12	870	4325	5	28	360.4
9. Illinois	13	912	4624	5.1	35	355.7
10. Penn State	13	891	4451	5	28	342.4
11. Ohio State	13	808	4136	5.1	38	318.2
12. Minnesota	12	744	3724	5	24	310.3

TOTAL DEFENSE	G	PLYS	YDS.	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Michigan State	14	903	3884	4.3	31	277.4
2. Illinois	13	842	3720	4.4	30	286.2
3. Wisconsin	14	850	4430	5.2	32	316.4
4. Michigan	13	803	4188	5.2	26	322.2
5. Ohio State	13	831	4206	5.1	31	323.5
6. Penn State	13	908	4211	4.6	25	323.9
7. Nebraska	13	876	4559	5.2	39	350.7
8. Iowa	13	962	4926	5.1	37	378.9
9. Purdue	13	932	5147	5.5	42	395.9
10. Minnesota	12	812	4837	6	46	403.1
11. Northwestern	13	869	5300	6.1	43	407.7
12. Indiana	12	854	5504	6.4	51	458.7

KICKOFF RETURNS	G	RET	YDS.	TD	AVG.
1. Purdue	13	44	1262	1	28.7
2. Nebraska	13	45	1146	1	25.5
3. Ohio State	13	42	1035	0	24.6
4. Michigan State	14	47	1113	0	23.7
5. Minnesota	12	55	1289	2	23.4
6. Penn State	13	43	981	1	22.8
7. Iowa	13	46	1008	0	21.9
8. Wisconsin	14	49	1072	0	21.9
9. Northwestern	13	48	1033	0	21.5
10. Indiana	12	70	1345	1	19.2
11. Michigan	13	35	645	0	18.4
12. Illinois	13	34	534	0	15.7

SCORING OFFENSE	G	TD	XP	2XP	DXP	FG	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Wisconsin	14	85	8	80	2	0	0	618	44.1
2. Michigan	13	56	13	54	0	0	2	433	33.3
3. Michigan State	14	54	18	48	3	0	1	434	31
4. Nebraska	13	46	19	44	1	0	0	379	29.2
5. Northwestern	13	51	6	50	1	0	0	376	28.9
6. Iowa	13	45	14	44	1	0	0	358	27.5
7. Purdue	13	42	19	39	0	0	1	350	26.9
8. Ohio State	13	39	16	36	0	0	0	318	24.5
9. Illinois	13	38	10	34	1	0	0	294	22.6
10. Indiana	12	31	13	30	1	0	0	257	21.4
11. Penn State	13	29	16	27	1	0	0	251	19.3
12. Minnesota	12	27	12	23	0	0	0	221	18.4

SCORING DEFENSE	G	TD	XP	2XP	DXP	FG	SAF	PTS	AVG
1. Penn State	13	25	15	23	0	0	0	218	16.8
2. Michigan	13	27	12	26	1	0	0	226	17.4
3. Michigan State	14	33	8	29	2	0	1	257	18.4
4. Wisconsin	14	34	9	29	2	0	1	266	19
5. Illinois	13	31	12	31	0	0	1	255	19.6
6. Ohio State	13	33	13	30	2	0	1	273	21
7. Nebraska	13	40	8	38	0	1	0	304	23.4
8. Iowa	13	38	16	34	0	0	0	310	23.8
9. Purdue	13	43	15	40	2	0	1	349	26.8
10. Northwestern	13	45	15	41	2	0	0	360	27.7
11. Minnesota	12	51	9	47	0	0	0	380	31.7
12. Indiana	12	55	21	53	1	0	0	448	37.3

PUNT RETURNS	G	RET	YDS.	TD	AVG.
1. Northwestern	13	8	127	0	15.9
2. Wisconsin	14	22	332	1	15.1
3. Michigan State	14	31	327	2	10.5
4. Ohio State	13	21	214	1	10.2
5. Michigan	13	22	198	0	9
6. Iowa	13	14	111	0	7.9
7. Nebraska	13	18	139	0	7.7
8. Minnesota	12	7	54	1	7.7
9. Penn State	13	41	312	0	7.6
10. Purdue	13	23	136	0	5.9
11. Indiana	12	8	46	0	5.8
12. Illinois	13	24	70	0	2.9

RUSHING OFFENSE	G	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Wisconsin	14	609	3298	5.4	48	235.6
2. Michigan	13	560	2884	5.2	31	221.8
3. Nebraska	13	611	2824	4.6	31	217.2
4. Ohio State	13	563	2485	4.4	20	191.2
5. Purdue	13	535	2361	4.4	22	181.6
6. Illinois	13	550	2232	4.1	21	171.7
7. Northwestern	13	577	2166	3.8	25	166.6
8. Penn State	13	515	2150	4.2	18	165.4
9. Indiana	12	492	1932	3.9	18	161
10. Minnesota	12	470	1920	4.1	14	160
11. Michigan State	14	489	1931	3.9	21	137.9
12. Iowa	13	454	1790	3.9	18	137.7

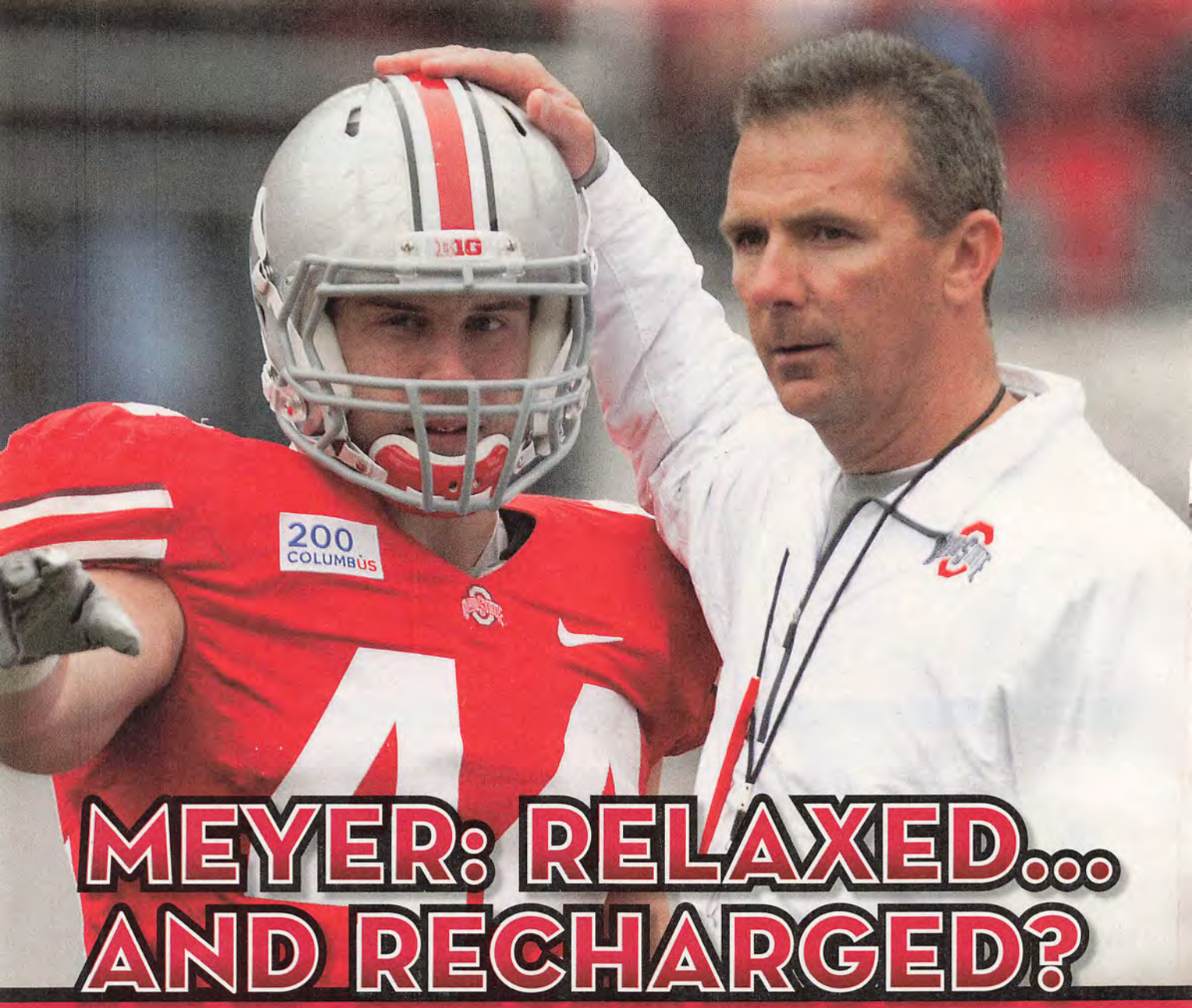
RUSHING DEFENSE	G	NO.	YDS.	AVG.	TD	YDS/G
1. Michigan State	14	502	1407	2.8	11	100.5
2. Illinois	13	514	1610	3.1	15	123.8
3. Michigan	13	429	1712	4	14	131.7
4. Penn State	13	481	1733	3.6	13	133.3
5. Ohio State	13	479	1840	3.8	13	141.5
6. Wisconsin	14	498	2139	4.3	17	152.8
7. Iowa	13	549	2028	3.7	16	156
8. Nebraska	13	515	2060	4.0	23	158.5
9. Purdue	13	531	2274	4.3	25	174.9
10. Northwestern	13	513	2305	4.5	27	177.3
11. Minnesota	12	459	2237	4.9	23	186.4
12. Indiana	12	552	2924	5.3	25	243.7

PUNTING	G	NO.	YDS.	AVG.	RET	AVG.	NET/P
1. Iowa	13	53	2182	41.2	64	1.2	38.5
2. Nebraska	13	59	2626	44.5	309	5.2	38.3
3. Purdue	13	68	2756	40.5	124	1.8	38.1
4. Ohio State	13	71	2889	40.7	171	2.4	37.4
5. Wisconsin	14	48	1943	40.5	138	2.9	36.4
6. Penn State	13	72	2985	41.5	128	1.8	36.1
7. Illinois	13	72	2778	38.6	147	2	35.7
8. Indiana	12	71	2723	38.4	166	2.3	35.5
9. Northwestern	13	52	2119	40.8	114	2.2	35.1
10. Michigan State	14	65	2651	40.8	211	3.2	35.1
11. Minnesota	12	59	2158	36.6	38	0.6	34.2
12. Michigan	13	46	1750	38	193	4.2	33.4

PASS OFFENSE	G	ATT	CMP	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Northwestern	13	289	407	9	71	3305	8.1	26	254.2
2. Michigan State	14	288	451	10	63.9	3535	7.8	26	252.5
3. Iowa	13	240	412	8	58.3	3052	7.4	25	234.8
4. Wisconsin	14	233	328	5	71	3280	10	34	234.3
5. Indiana	12	211	378	11	55.8	2393	6.3	10	199.4
6. Purdue	13	233	391	11	59.6	2538	6.5	17	195.2
7. Illinois	13	226	362	13	62.4	2392	6.6	14	184
8. Michigan	13	155	284	16	54.6	2377	8.4	22	182.8
9. Penn State	13	181	376	12	48.1	2301	6.1	10	177
10. Nebraska	13	164	293	8	56	2115	7.2	13	162.7
11. Minnesota	12	134	274	10	48.9	1804	6.6	10	150.3
12. Ohio State	13	125	245	5	51	1651	6.7	18	127

PASS DEFENSE	G	ATT	CMP	INT	PCT.	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
1. Illinois	13	180	328	10	54.9	2110	6.4	15	162.3
2. Wisconsin	14	214	352	16	60.8	2291	6.5	15	163.6
3. Michigan State	14	216	401	18	53.9	2477	6.2	20	176.9
4. Ohio State	13	214	352	13	60.8	2366	6.7	18	182
5. Michigan	13	221	374	9	59.1	2476	6.6	12	190.5
6. Penn State	13	238	427	14	55.7	2478	5.8	12	190.6
7. Nebraska	13	192	361	10	53.2	2499	6.9	16	192.2
8. Indiana	12	181	302	5	59.9	2580	8.5	26	215.0
9. Minnesota	12	239	353	4	67.7	2600	7.4	23	216.7
10. Purdue	13	232	401	12	57.9	2873	7.2	17	221.0
11. Iowa	13	256	413	10	62	2898	7.0	21	222.9
12. Northwestern	13	216	356	12	60.7	2995	8.4	16	230.4

TURNOVER MARGIN	G	+FUM	+INT	TOT	-FUM	-INT	-TOT	MAR
1. Wisconsin	14	10	16	26	5	5	10	+16
2. Michigan	13	20	9	29	6	16	22	+7
3. Michigan State	14	7	18	25	8	10	18	+7
4. Ohio State	13	7	13	20	10	5	15	5
5. Northwestern	13	8	12	20	8	9	17	3
6. Purdue	13	9	12	21	9	11	20	1
Iowa	13	9	10	19	10	8	18	1
Penn State	13	12	14	26	13	12	25	1
9. Nebraska	13	8	10	18	11	8	19	-1
10. Indiana	12	11	5	16	7	11	18	-2
11. Illinois	13	12	10	22	15	13	28	-6
12. Minnesota	12	5	4	9	7	10	17	-8



MEYER: RELAXED... AND RECHARGED?

BUCKEYES HOPE TO BOUNCE BACK AS FAST AS THEIR NEW COACH DID

By Dennis Dodd

Photo by Greg Bartram-US PRESSWIRE

Which Urban Meyer is Ohio State getting?

There are different versions, as diverse as a Prius and a Cadillac, Holiday Inn and the Ritz.

Are the Buckeyes getting the reborn Urban, relaxed from at least a few months off from his chosen profession?

Or are they getting the driven, over-the-top championship grinder whose methods were questioned in a riveting offseason story in *The Sporting News*?

Actually, they're getting both. That's what is so fascinating and yet disconcerting about what was the best free-agent coaching name on the market. Ohio State got Meyer on Nov. 28, when they named him to replace interim Luke Fickell. But it doesn't really *know* what it got.

The only certainty — or near certainty — is that Ohio State is going to win. Perhaps win the Big Ten and contend for national championships, depending on how long Meyer stays. That much we know.

The job fits him. But does he still fit the job?

"I didn't think I'd coach this year," Meyer said.

And that's where the story of the road back begins. Life was good. The long-term well-being of the driven 47-year-old wasn't an issue.

He was a dad, a full-time dad again. Even with ESPN analyst work wedged in there, Meyer was seeing daughters Nicki at Georgia Tech and Gigi at Florida Gulf Coast University on a regular basis.

Urban Meyer, coaching legend, had become Urban Meyer, first-base coach for son Nate's travel baseball team.

It got better.

Last spring, Urban and Nate, 13, road-tripped together. Cooperstown. Penn State and Rutgers camps. A Yankees game. They flew in by helicopter with former Rutgers coach Greg Schiano. Nate got to fire an M-4 assault rifle and ride in a Humvee during a trip to West Point. They stayed in Red Blaik's old residence.

"That's probably the best two weeks we

ever had together," Meyer said.

When — to the surprise of no one — he took the Ohio State job, there was a snarky joke going around: Meyer was stepping away from his family to devote more time to football. (See the reversal of terms there?)

"There were a lot of phone calls about other situations," Meyer said of job possibilities. "Maybe two years from now I would go to another job. I was kind of enjoying that part of my life, but I missed it so bad, being at those games."

We kind of knew that. When a guy comes back 24 hours after resigning (see Florida, December 2009), it is assumed that football has a certain tug on his life. And so there he was in late November back in the game — less than a year after leaving Florida the *second* time.

And so here they are, the Buckeyes, beginning both an NCAA probation and the Meyer era.

He'll always have the family memories of 2011, but football has been that mistress that Meyer cannot drop. There are worse places to make a comeback.

He landed in perhaps the nation's best support system for that comeback. The first full-time guy to follow Jim Tressel can coach like few others in the modern game. Also, Meyer has given the term "burnout" a 21st century redefinition.

"After that Sugar Bowl? No, no way," said Ohio State strength coach Mickey Marotti.

The question put to Marotti, one of Meyer's closest confidants, is whether he expected his boss to coach again so soon. On the floor of the Superdome the night of Jan. 2, 2010, Meyer looked gaunt, sickly.

"Awful," Marotti said. "Pants were dragging like he had poop in his drawers."

Urban and his wife Shelley embraced publicly and emotionally at the conclusion of that 51-24 win over Cincinnati. It was more out of relief than celebration. Perhaps the coach has simply traded venues on an incredible stress load.

Marotti, for one, did not expect Meyer back this soon.

"I also know him pretty well," he said. "What else was he going to do? He's a football coach."

The health issues aren't back at this point. The piercing headaches and esophageal spasms were historically stress-induced. Marotti won't hesitate to inject an opinion if he notices the coach boiling over.

For now, diet and dialing it down are simple remedies. Meyer did well to control his emotions when Ohio State was slapped with a one-year bowl ban on Dec. 20. It wasn't easy.

"I've had a couple (of issues) that I probably would have lost my friggin' mind over and went on a rampage," the new Meyer says, alluding to the old Meyer. "I haven't done that. I've taken the Joe Paterno advice. Slow down; don't react. You hear something? Take your time, investigate it, research it."

The old Meyer, says the new Meyer, would have reacted immediately and impetuously — "Woosh" he says, punctuating the point by sweeping his hands through air. Unbearable stress cultivating throughout his career is not an option. The new Meyer says the old Meyer was not ready for the SEC after taking the Florida job in 2005.

The Sporting News story pulled aside a curtain on that old Meyer. The story recounted how Meyer told Ohio State recruit Stefon Diggs that he shouldn't go to Florida because of character issues in the locker room. Those issues, the story summarized, were leftovers from a culture the coach had created.

Former Gator Percy Harvin reportedly attacked former assistant Billy Gonzales and was never disciplined. Gonzales later said the incident never happened.

"Over the last two years he was there," one former player told the publication, "the players had taken complete control of the team."

None of this, it should be noted, has lessened the gushing at Ohio State. He is one of them, an Ohio native. Former Buckeye coach Earle Bruce is a mentor from when Meyer was a grad assistant in Columbus. The 2012 Bucks promise to be stout on defense, but could have issues offensively. There aren't many Harvins — the football-playing type — on that side of the ball.

The bowl ban hit 22 days after he was hired. Meyer and the staff had to go back and re-recruit the guts of a class that was eventually ranked in the top five. Some Big Ten coaches and administrators were upset that Ohio State was given an NCAA waiver to operate with parts of two staffs for a time. In general, Fickell prepared for the bowl game while Meyer recruited.

Wisconsin, in particular, was upset that former Ohio State players in the NFL allegedly were calling recruits. That would be an NCAA violation. Meyer told *Sporting News* and CBSSports.com that the alleged incidents occurred before he was hired and added there were no current NCAA issues.

MEYER'S HEAD COACHING RECORD

Year	School	Record	Final AP Poll
2001	Bowling Green	8-3	NR
2002	Bowling Green	9-3	NR
2003	Utah	10-2	21
2004	Utah	12-0	4
2005	Florida	9-3	12
2006	Florida	13-1	1
2007	Florida	9-4	13
2008	Florida	13-1	1
2009	Florida	13-1	3
2010	Florida	8-5	NR
Totals: 10 Years		**104-23 (.819)**	

What is the message, then, to the innocents left on the roster, especially the seniors, who can't play in a bowl?

"I don't know yet," Meyer said. "I'm really concerned about that part."

If his coaching magic holds, Ohio State could become a modern version of Auburn, 1993. Those Tigers were undefeated but banned by the NCAA from postseason (and television). Ohio State's penalty could invite similar awkwardness in the Big Ten. USC's absence from the first Pac-12 Championship Game due to NCAA sanctions forced an undeserving UCLA to play an uncompetitive game against Oregon.

But if there are only five programs in the country that can survive the tsunami of Tattoogate, Ohio State is one of them. Fans can't wait to see how Meyer's offensive expertise is applied to sophomore quarterback Braxton Miller. Super recruit Noah Spence, a defensive end, could be the cornerstone of another great defense.

We'll see if Ohio State football makes a parallel comeback along with its coach. There is an indelible image of Meyer, the analyst, bounding out of a Michigan State broadcast booth to chat before a game last season. He was reminiscing about the good times with Nate. He was glad to have *gained* 22 pounds. He looked healthy, happy.

Then he said something else before going back to what turned out to be his temporary home behind the microphone. It was going to be a while, but he would coach again someday.

Someday came 43 days later.

VAMPIRE-HOUR WORKOUTS HAVE SPARTANS RISING

BY DENNIS DODD

Photo by Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images

It's vampire hour at Michigan State's Duffy Daugherty Football Building. Five-thirty in the morning. The undead are still sleeping.

These Spartans? Like it or not, they're here in mind *and* body.

"I set my alarm for about 4:40," safety Isaiah Lewis said. "I have to force myself to get up."

This is a glimpse into Michigan State's winter conditioning. Its clinical definition is something close to torture. To hammer the message home, coach Mark Dantonio has placed a conspicuous sign inside the Spartans' indoor practice facility.

Champions Are Built On a Thousand Invisible Mornings

Dantonio is big on signs. They're everywhere you look around Michigan State football facilities, all of them making the Spartan warrior connection.

"That's what he is about, right there," said strength coach Ken Mannie, pointing at another sign, this one billboard-sized in the weight room. "Effort, Toughness, Knowledge. If you're lacking in one of the three, you're probably not going to play here."

If only the snooze button for those 5:30 workouts could be pushed a thousand times. That's obvious as Michigan State players come straggling in for two hours of running, jumping, cutting, pulling and pushing.

They all do, these Spartans. They have to leave time to get taped before birds awaken, loosen up before the Dunkin' Donuts manager has poured the first cup of coffee.

Before they can dream about a Rose Bowl, they have put in the work while most everyone else is ... dreaming.

Are they better than your favorite team? In that sense, these Spartans are no different than, well, a thousand of their peers around the country. These pre-dawn drills set the throttle on a program. And these Spartans have dreams of their own, quarter-century old dreams.

Their last trip to Pasadena was in 1988.

After consecutive 11-win seasons, the Spartans are allowed to dream such dreams. What will life be like without inspirational quarterback Kirk Cousins? Are these early-morning Spartans going to be slackers or brothers? All in, or just sometimes? Spartan warriors or the conquered?

"That's something that will be mentioned when it's Friday night before a game," said Cousins' replacement, junior quarterback Andrew Maxwell. "Listen guys, this is why we pushed those sleds in February. This is why we ran those gassers in July when it was 100 degrees.

"Don't think that it was nothing. It was for this moment, right now."

Like all coaches, Dantonio is big on weeding out those slackers during vampire hour. During a morning workout, Michigan State videographer David "Diff" Diffenderffer spotted two players vomiting into trash cans. Diff has worked for the NFL Network and helps make the videos for Michigan State's website state of the art.

But puke will not make the cut on this day.

"This is my third winter conditioning," said junior linebacker Max Bullough, a third generation Spartan who probably bleeds green. His father and grandfather played for Michigan State. "You can tell the type of guys that Coach D brings in. It's a different atmosphere. It's a different chemistry. As soon as they walk in, they're ready to work."

They'd better be ready. Embarrassment lurks at every early-morning session.

Even Jerel Worthy was there at 5:30 in the morning this spring. The former Spartans All-American defensive tackle had just returned from the NFL Combine. His pro paychecks will be supporting a father recovering from a stroke and a mother with health issues of her own.

Their plight was the primary reason Worthy left early for the draft after last season. But working out for future employers at the Combine is one thing. Torturing yourself for free before the crack of dawn is another. Worthy was rewarded in the spring when he became a second-round draft pick of Green Bay.

"I feel like this is my home," said Worthy, the Spartans' first All-American defensive lineman since Bubba Smith. "This lets guys know that you haven't forgotten where you came from. This is always going to be my program.

"This is something I'm going to do for years to come."

Michigan State is one of those programs with in-state self-esteem issues. It lives in the shadow of Michigan. ("Little Brother" is the derogatory term most often heard.) It hasn't been to the Rose Bowl in a while. With a trip to Pasadena in the balance, the Spartans lost a three-point game to Wisconsin in the first Big Ten Championship Game.

"It was honestly one of the most devastating losses I've been a part of in my entire life," Bullough said.

Devastating, not final. Michigan State beat Michigan last season for the fourth consecutive year. That tattoo that Worthy sports on his left bicep of a Spartan stomping a Wolverine will be undefeated for life.

"It's a long time coming, and it just showed that our program has overcome a lot of adversity ...," Worthy said.

At the end of that epic win over Michigan, the "Little Brother" chant had turned into a mocking "Little Sisters" chant from the Spartan Stadium fans at the Wolverines.

But the Spartans are on the brink of something great, and there are a lot of folks who agree. Entering his sixth season, Dantonio's built a top-10 defense. The school paid top dollar to retain defensive coordinator Pat Narduzzi, who was being courted by Texas A&M. As gutty as Cousins was, Maxwell might be a better athlete.

"We're becoming one of those top programs," Maxwell said. "We're becoming one of those programs (that) when people hear Michigan State, they think 'elite.'"

Slightly less than two hours into this particular slice of dark-thirty conditioning heaven, all the Spartans are thinking is "sleep." Mannie calls them together for the final thought of the day.

"Good is the enemy of great. We're good. We're very good. But we're talking about being great. It's not OK to be good," Mannie said.

That's what former Spartans stress when they call the strength coach to inquire how vampire hour is going these days.

"They're still getting up for winter conditioning, right? Keep doing that. That made us tough."

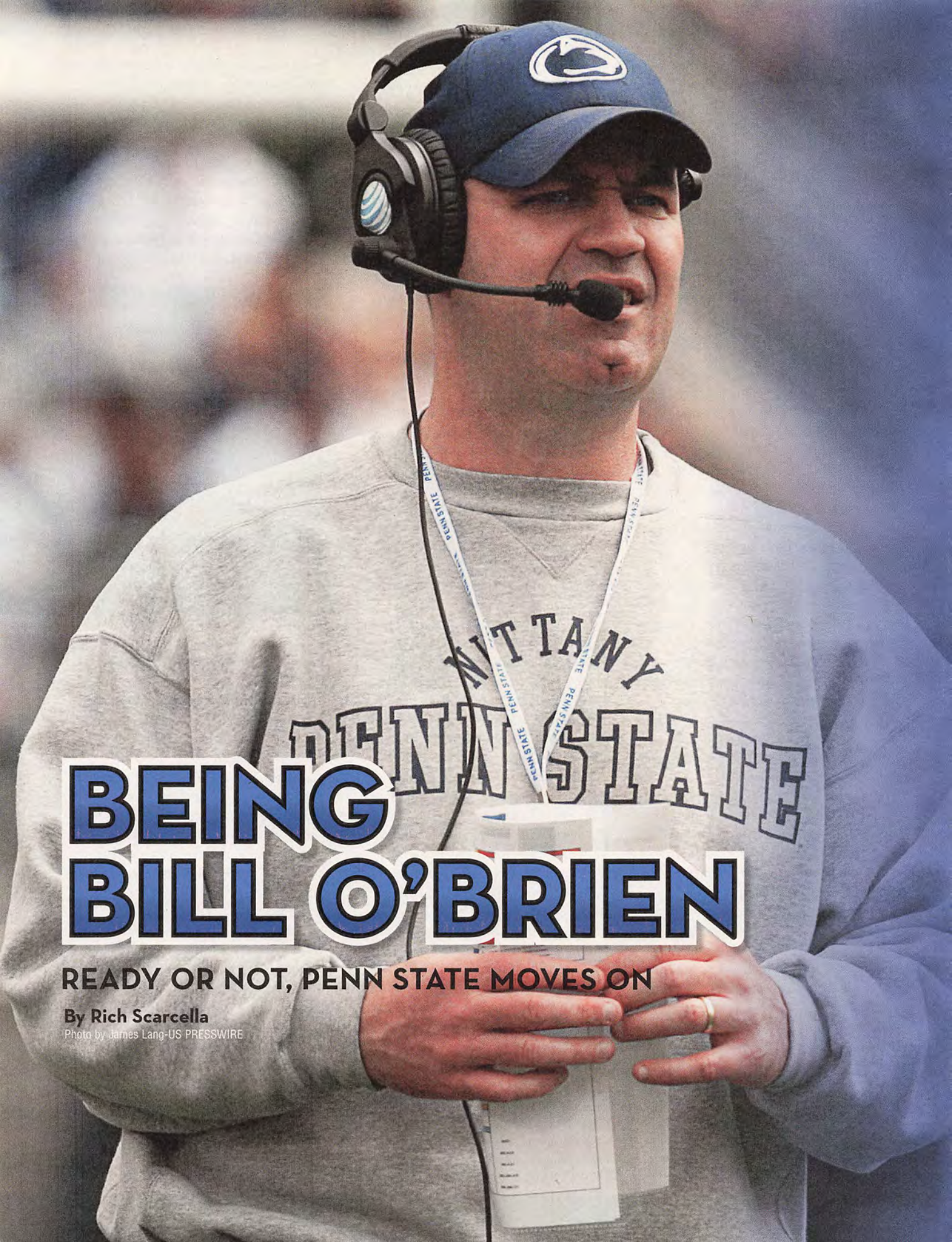
"Is it that that made them tough," Mannie wonders of the graduates of his green and white boot camp, "or is it, 'Don't get soft on those guys?'"

Set your alarm.

DEFENSIVE LEADERS

Big Ten rankings in total defense in 2011:

1.	Michigan State	277.43
2.	Illinois	286.15
3.	Wisconsin	316.43
4.	Michigan	322.15
5.	Ohio State	323.54
6.	Penn State	323.92
7.	Nebraska	350.69
8.	Iowa	378.92
9.	Purdue	395.92
10.	Minnesota	403.08
11.	Northwestern	407.69
12.	Indiana	458.67



BEING BILL O'BRIEN

READY OR NOT, PENN STATE MOVES ON

By Rich Scarcella

Photo by James Lang-US PRESSWIRE

Charles London was working as a football coach for the first time when he met Bill O'Brien in 2005 at Duke, London's alma mater.

London was a graduate assistant who almost immediately saw something special in O'Brien, the Blue Devils' offensive coordinator.

"I just knew," London recalled. "Sometimes you're around a guy who you think is going to be a great head coach. I've always had that feeling about him and always wanted to coach for him."

London received that opportunity when he accepted O'Brien's offer in January to join his new Penn State staff as running backs coach and recruiting coordinator.

"He's been a good friend and a good mentor," London said. "Once he got the job here and called me, I didn't think twice about coming here. I think it's because of his vision and leadership. He's a very bright guy. He knows what he wants to do."

Few Penn State fans had heard of the 42-year-old O'Brien when he was hired in January to succeed Hall of Fame coach Joe Paterno, who was fired in November in the wake of the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal.

Many knew him only as the New England Patriots offensive coordinator who got into the much-publicized sideline argument with quarterback Tom Brady last season.

They didn't know about his success with the Patriots, who were third in the NFL in scoring last season; his 14 years as a college assistant coach at Georgia Tech, Maryland and Duke; or that he was a Brown graduate, like Paterno.

"I think he is a very detailed person, very meticulous about what he does," said Penn State offensive line coach Mac McWhorter. "As far as his organizational skills, he's really good. He has a vision of what he wants to do and he sticks to a plan.

"He is a bright, young star in this business."

Shortly after the Patriots' Super Bowl loss to the New York Giants, O'Brien met individually with each member of the Penn State football program, including players, coaches, medical staff and clerical staff.

"I wanted to make sure everybody associated with the program understood their roles," O'Brien said.

He also wrote a policy book between 80 and 100 pages long, which he handed out to his players in February.

"It involves rules for the team," he said, "job descriptions, scheduling for spring practice and training camp. I worked on it a long time, not only in preparation for being a head coach, but after I got the job. It's something you put together during your whole career."

O'Brien already has impressed many former Penn State players, some of whom expressed displeasure about Paterno's firing.

"The one thing I tell him all the time is to just be who you are," said former Penn State defensive tackle Matt Millen, now an analyst for ESPN/ABC. "'You're not gonna be Joe Paterno. There's only been one of them. You don't have to be him. You have to be Bill O'Brien,' and he will."

O'Brien faces three daunting tasks:

- Succeeding the legendary Paterno, who died in late January after a battle with lung cancer.
- Moving the program forward after the Sandusky scandal.
- Teaching new offensive and defensive schemes to the players.

"Wherever I've been, players have been very resilient," O'Brien said. "They love to be out on the field playing. They love to be in the weight room lifting weights. It's fun to be around them because they've worked extremely hard.

"Everything is new. The terminology is new. The coaching style is new. The tempo might be different. Of course, that's what change is about. These guys have embraced it."

O'Brien has implemented the basics of the same offense he directed at New England, which means more decisions in the hands of the quarterbacks and more passes to the running backs and tight ends. That will be different for the Nittany Lions and their fans.

"It's kind of like learning a new language," tight end Garry Gilliam said. "We're learning a whole new offense. We're learning it very well.

"We (the tight ends) run a lot more routes than we did before. There's probably more thinking than we had to do as far as reading coverages. We're involved in pretty much everything. I think we're all making great strides."

New defensive coordinator Ted Roof was the head coach at Duke when O'Brien was his offensive coordinator. He's installed a new high-risk, high-reward scheme that features many different looks.

"I won't comment on the specifics of practice, but they've been tough, hard-nosed and a lot more focused," defensive end Pete Massaro said. "Coach O'Brien knows what he wants to accomplish. All of the coaches know what they want to accomplish. Everything is real precise."

O'Brien also changed the strength and conditioning program, hiring Craig Fitzgerald away from South Carolina to direct it. Fitzgerald runs an Olympic-style lifting program that, according to the players, has boosted the linemen.

"I think this is a new challenge and Billy O'Brien is the perfect guy for it," Fitzgerald said. "We're all lucky to be here, but Penn State is lucky to have Coach O'Brien. He had other opportunities, but he took this one and grabbed it."

> "'You're not gonna be Joe Paterno. There's only been one of them. You don't have to be him. You have to be Bill O'Brien,' and he will."

O'Brien's time as the Patriots' offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach helped Penn State land quarterbacks Steven Bench (in the Class of 2012) and Christian Hackenberg (in the Class of 2013).

"They'll be exposed to things they haven't been exposed to," Millen said. "Just schematically, there'll be some different concepts. ... The stuff he'll be able to do in the passing game in 1-on-1 coaching, that stuff is going to be as fresh as what's out there."

The players seem to have new optimism and enthusiasm after what they endured late last year and early this year, watching their longtime coach be dismissed and then pass away.

"It's a very unique time," said center Matt Stankiewitch. "You have to embrace change. Coach O'Brien is coming right from the NFL coaching Tom Brady. It's very exciting to have a coach like that as your head coach. You're listening to every word he says. He's the best out there."

O'Brien said he appreciates what he's heard from current and former Penn State players, but he understands the good vibes will last only as long as the Lions succeed in two areas.

"All that really matters at the end of the day," he said, "is that guys go to class and graduate and we win games."

ILLINOIS FIGHTING ILLINI

For more coverage of the Fighting Illini, visit illinois.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Billy Gonzales, Chris Beatty DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tim Banks STADIUM: Memorial Stadium: 60,670

AT A GLANCE

2011:
7-6, 2-6 Big Ten (5th, Leaders)

COACH:
Tim Beckman — At Illinois: 1st year; overall: 21-16, 3 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 6 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Nathan Scheelhaase, RB Josh Ferguson, WR Darius Millines, C Graham Pocic, MLB Jonathan Brown, CB/WR Terry Hawthorne, DT Akeem Spence

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Illini welcome back seven starters — including several elite athletes — from the defense that ranked seventh nationally in total yards allowed. Scheelhaase, a consummate leader, has 26 consecutive starts under his belt. Ferguson, a scatback, looks like a perfect fit for the spread.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
There are question marks and depth issues on the offensive line that require some youngsters to step forward immediately. The special teams were the worst in the nation last year, so there's a long way to go to become mediocre. The Illini need somebody (Millines?) to become a go-to receiver.

KEY LOSSES:
TB Jason Ford, WR A.J. Jenkins, OT Jeff Allen, DE Whitney Mercilus, OLB Trulon Henry, CB Tavon Wilson, K Derek Dimke

OVERVIEW:
Beckman inherits this program at an intriguing time. Though Illinois has won bowl games two years in a row for the first time, there's an overall wariness about the program's prospects due to the six consecutive losses to end the 2011 regular season and the lack of depth in 2012. Nonetheless, the friendly home schedule suggests the Illini can be bowl-bound again.

Beckman Striving for Consistency with Erratic Illini

Less than four months after Mike Thomas became Illinois' athletic director, he decided the Ron Zook roller coaster wasn't the right ride for the Illini.

Zook took Illinois on its first trip to Pasadena in 24 seasons. He had a knack for luring high-end talent to Champaign, which led to the Illini producing four first-round and four second-round selections in the past four NFL drafts.

Illinois never had so many upper-echelon picks in such a small timeframe. Oh, and Illinois just won bowl games in back-to-back seasons for the first time in its history.

But with the rare highs came repulsive lows. An alarming percentage of Zook's four-star recruits either did nothing at Illinois or never made it to school. The Illini finished with a winning Big Ten record just once. Zook's Illini followed up their 2008 Rose Bowl appearance with 16 losses in the next two seasons.

The Illini won their first six games last year — the program's best start since 1951 — only to lose their last six regular-season games and ensure Zook's exit.

Into this confusing cauldron steps Tim Beckman.

He's a gung-ho 47-year-old defensive specialist who spent his first three years as a head coach restoring Toledo toward the top of the MAC.

He has a strong base in Big Ten football (he served as Jim Tressel's cornerbacks coach in 2005-06 and his father, Dave, was an Iowa assistant from 1974-78) and he promises to require his players to be accountable off the field. Illinois had numerous off-field problems during Zook's tenure.

"I'm in this profession for the kids," Beckman said. "It's been a part of my life since I was born."

Beckman has made it a daily habit to call three to five former Illini to let them know how much he appreciates his new life at Illinois and to bring them back into the fold. He invited players from the 1952 Rose Bowl team to speak to the team before the spring game in April.

In addition to turning back the clock, Beckman fast-forwarded it with his implementation of "Illini Time." He requires players to report for meetings five minutes early in order to be considered on time.

"We're going to stick with the things that we've been successful with," Beckman said. "It's something I've seen that pays off. It's respect."

Beckman did his best to build a young staff laden with proven recruiters. He pulled LSU receivers coach Billy Gonzales and Vanderbilt receivers coach Chris Beatty and installed them as co-offensive coordinators. After an awkward attempt to keep defensive coordinator Vic Koenning (he left for North Carolina after initially being offered the co-coordinator job at Illinois), Beckman lured Cincinnati defensive coordinator Tim Banks.

Luke Butkus, Dick's nephew and an All-Big Ten center for Illinois' 2001 Big Ten championship team, returned home to become the offensive line coach. Defensive line coach Keith Gilmore, who developed 2010 first-round pick Corey Liuget and 2011 first-round pick Whitney Mercilus, is the only full-time Zook assistant that Beckman retained.

"These players have bought in," Beckman said.

"It has been a privilege to coach 'em. They've been unbelievable. They've been eager. They've worked to learn the new system. But there's still a long way to go. Depth is a major concern with

Jonathan Brown
Photo by Scott Boehm

this program."

OFFENSE

In a perfect Beckman world, Illinois' offense will resemble Toledo's spread attack that ranked among the nation's top 10 in points (42.2 per game) and yards (481.3 per game) last season. But Beckman is a realist and wants co-coordinators Billy Gonzales and Chris Beatty to fit their plans around his players' strengths.

Considering junior quarterback Nathan Scheelhaase might be more dangerous as a runner than a thrower — he has 1,492 rushing yards and 3,935 passing yards in his 26 career starts — and the fact that Illinois is short on proven receivers, this shouldn't be a team that chucks the ball all over Memorial Stadium.

Scheelhaase opens fall practice as the starter, but sophomore Reilly O'Toole, who is more of a prototypical thrower, will compete for the job after hitting 40 of 67 passes for 270 yards in spot duty last season.

"Nathan is what you look for in a leader," Beckman said. "But Reilly is not that far behind that, either. He's another guy who's all about the team."

Redshirt freshman Josh Ferguson and sophomore Donovonn Young are the leaders in the backfield. Ferguson's shiftiness and pass-catching ability make him a perfect weapon in the spread. He delivered 150 rushing yards in the spring game.

"We didn't know much about Josh coming in," Beckman said. "What a pleasant surprise. What a competitive kid. He played at a mature level."

Young didn't get to do much in the spring due to a foot injury, but he proved himself as a pile-mover last fall with 451 yards and six touchdowns. Look for Ferguson and Young to touch the ball as often as they can handle it this fall, as Illinois needs all the help it can get in the passing game.

A.J. Jenkins, the San Francisco 49ers' first-round pick in April, snagged 90 of the team's 226 completions last season. That leaves a huge hole.

Junior Darius Millines (19 catches, 218 yards) is the best hope as a breakout performer, but he missed the spring with a foot injury. Juniors Spencer Harris (26 catches, 226 yards) and Ryan Lankford (12 catches, 108 yards) are the only other relatively proven guys, which explains why senior cornerbacks Terry Hawthorne and Justin Green spent the latter stages of spring ball at receiver.

"That's the position where we've got to start to get better," Beckman said. "The biggest thing is consistency. We're so young at the position."

Tight end could offer remedies; sophomore Jon Davis and junior Evan Wilson combined for 31 catches, 276 yards and four scores last season. Sophomore Matt LaCosse and senior Eddie Viliunas make

Nathan Scheelhaase
Photo by Scott Boehm

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Nathan Scheelhaase*	Jr.	Put up 5,427 total yards, 41 TDs first two years.	Reilly O'Toole, So.
TB	Josh Ferguson	Fr.	He's shifty and boasts great hands.	Donovonn Young, So.
WR	Darius Millines*	Jr.	Flashes of brilliance last year ruined by injury.	Terry Hawthorne, Sr.
WR	Spencer Harris*	Jr.	Willing and able to go over the middle.	Fritz Rock, So.
WR	Ryan Lankford	Jr.	When will his great speed pay off?	Jordan Frysinger, Fr.
TE	Jon Davis	So.	Terrific athlete made for mismatches.	Evan Wilson, Jr.
LT	Simon Cvijanovic	So.	Started last four regular-season games.	Scott McDowell, Fr.
LG	Hugh Thornton*	Sr.	Owns 25 career starts, but regressed in '11.	Alex Hill, So.
C	Graham Pocic*	Sr.	Can he return to All-Big Ten form?	Tony Durkin, Fr.
RG	Tyler Sands	Sr.	Look for a position battle this fall.	Ted Karras, Fr.
RT	Michael Heitz*	So.	Needs to prove himself after nine starts last year.	Pat Flavin, Fr.
K	Taylor Zalewski	Fr.	Big foot; needs more consistency.	Nick Immekus, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Justin Staples	Sr.	Last chance to live up to his promise.	Tim Kynard, Jr.
NT	Akeem Spence*	Jr.	Terrific at clogging up the middle.	Jake Howe, So.
DT	Glenn Foster*	Sr.	Packed on the pounds in offseason.	Austin Teitsma, So.
DE	Michael Buchanan*	Sr.	The next Whitney Mercilus?	Brandon Denmark, Jr.
LB	Houston Bates	So.	Faded last season after a strong September.	Ralph Cooper, So.
LB	Jonathan Brown*	Jr.	Piled up 19.5 TFLs at WLB last year.	Henry Dickinson, So.
STAR	Ashante Williams	Sr.	DUI cost him three games and starting job in '11.	Ta'Jarvis Fuller, Fr.
CB	Justin Green	Sr.	No interceptions in 16 career starts.	Jack Ramsey, Sr.
CB	Terry Hawthorne*	Sr.	Two career INT returns for touchdowns.	Eaton Spence, Fr.
SS	Steve Hull*	Jr.	Mistakes decreased as 2011 went along.	Patrick Nixon-Youman, Sr.
FS	Supo Sanni*	Sr.	Achilles' injury short-circuited his spring.	Earnest Thomas, So.
P	Justin DuVernois*	So.	Much-improved after 38.3-yard average in 2011.	Ryan Lankford, Jr.

*Returning Starter

FIGHTING ILLINI RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Dami Ayoola
Heavy hitters like Auburn, Notre Dame and West Virginia put offers on the board for Ayoola to join their program, but the 5-10, 201-pound back found his home in Champaign and stuck with the Illini even through its coaching change. He will be counted on early to improve the potency of the Illini offense.

Vontrell Williams
The city of Chicago is crucial to the Illini if they are to have long term recruiting success under Tim Beckman, and in Williams they secured one of the area's best in the 2012 class. Williams is a tough competitor with a non-stop motor who could fight his way into early playing time.

Devin Church
Ayoola will come into Champaign with all the fanfare at the running back position, but the 5-8, 175-pound Church has the home-run hitting ability that can give the Illini a change of pace in the backfield. Beckman was able to lure him away from a Northern Illinois commitment late in the recruiting cycle.

THE SLEEPER

Mike Svetina
At St. Ignatius High in Cleveland, the 6-2, 220-pound Svetina was called on to play anywhere from safety to defensive end. He has a great nose for the football and is a tough, no-nonsense football player. Those are the kind of guys you need on your defense and in your locker room.

Committments	19
Average Stars	2.74
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	5
Total Stars	52
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 11

2013 NEEDS: Beckman did a great job shoring up his running back position in the final few weeks after being named the Illini's head coach. Now he will need to surround his ball-carrier with other playmakers to share the offensive load. Quarterback and wide receiver will be two crucial areas of need to address in the 2013 class. Defensively, Illinois has been a consistent producer of cornerback talent, but its reserves at the position are low and will need to be replenished.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Dami Ayoola	RB	5-10	201	★★★	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	St. Thomas Aquinas
Rated as the No. 59 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 running back... Rushed for 549 yards and seven touchdowns in 2011... Rushed for 855 yards as a junior... Chose Illinois over Auburn, Boston College, Cincinnati, Iowa, Notre Dame, Wisconsin, West Virginia and others.						
Robbie Bain	OL	6-3	300	★★★	Bolingbrook, IL	Bolingbrook
Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 51 offensive guard...First-team all-state selection in 2011...Helped lead team to a state championship as a senior.						
Taylor Barton	DB	6-1	200	★★★	Orlando, FL	Lake Highland
Second-team Florida Class 4A All-State selection in 2011...Had 67 tackles, three interceptions and three sacks as a senior...Had 93 tackles and two interceptions as a junior...Chose Illinois over Syracuse and others.						
BJ Bello	DB	6-2	205	★★	New Lenox, IL	Lincoln-Way West
Had 81 tackles, three tackles for loss, one forced fumble and one interception...All-area selection...Chose Illinois over Minnesota, Western Michigan, Toledo, Ball State and Bowling Green.						
V'Angelo Bentley	DB	5-10	178	★★★	Cleveland, OH	Glenville Academic Campus
Rated as the nation's No. 63 cornerback by Rivals.com...Participated in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl...Chose Illinois over Iowa, Kansas, Pittsburgh, Air Force, Toledo, Ohio, Kent State and Bowling Green.						
Devin Church	RB	5-8	175	★★★	Southfield, MI	Brother Rice
Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com... Rushed for a school-record 1,919 yards as a senior... Chose Illinois over Boston College, Northern Illinois, Toledo and Bowling Green.						
Ryan Frain	K	6-1	210	★★	Indianapolis, IN	Scecina Memorial
All-state selection... Made field goals of 49, 48, 46 and 43 yards as a senior... Chose Illinois over Georgia Tech.						
Ta'Jarvis Fuller	DB	6-1	190	★★★	Fort Myers, FL	Dunbar
Rated as the nation's No. 53 safety by Rivals.com...Participated in the FACA North-South All-Star Game... Chose Illinois over Wisconsin, Louisville, Georgia Tech, Maryland, Minnesota, Indiana, Iowa State and others.						
Justin Hardee	ATH	6-1	185	★★	Cleveland, OH	Glenville Academic Campus
Played in the Next Level Northeast Ohio All-Star Game... Chose Illinois over Akron, Bowling Green, Kansas, Marshall, Toledo and others.						
Jevaris Little	DB	6-1	180	★★★	St. Petersburg, FL	Lakewood
Played in the *Tampa Bay Times* Senior All-Star Game... Chose Illinois over Indiana, Kansas, Toledo and others.						
Mason Monheim	LB	6-1	215	★★★	Orrville, OH	Orrville
First-team all-state selection... Had 129 tackles, 13 tackles for loss and three sacks as a senior...Participated in the Ohio/Pennsylvania Big 33 All-Star Game.						
T.J. Neal	LB	6-1	225	★★★	McKeesport, PA	McKeesport
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 outside linebacker...Chose Illinois over Auburn, Florida, Nebraska, Pittsburgh, West Virginia and others.						
Teko Powell	DT	6-2	285	★★★	Miami, FL	Miami Norland
First-team all-state selection...Had 107 tackles as a senior... Participated in the Under Armour Dade vs. Broward All-Star Football Game and the Semper Fidelis All-America Game.						
Daniel Rhodes	TE	6-3	250	★★	Charlotte, NC	Independence
Played tight end and offensive tackle in high school... Had 15 catches for 312 yards and two touchdowns as a tight end in 2010.						
Jason Robertson	WR	6-1	185	★★	Mokena, IL	Lincoln Way East
Second-team all-state selection... Had 39 receptions for 881 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2011...Had 23 receptions for 615 yards and nine touchdowns as a junior.						
Joseph Spencer	OL	6-4	270	★★★	Mason, OH	Mason
Rated as the No. 41 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 offensive guard... Chose Illinois over Cincinnati, North Carolina State, South Florida and others.						
Mike Svetina	LB	6-2	220	★★★	Brunswick, OH	St. Ignatius
Had 111 tackles, four sacks and three interceptions as a senior...Helped lead team to state championship in 2011.						
Lakeith Walls	ATH	6-3	185	★★★	Cleveland, OH	Rhodes
Participated in the Next Level Northeast Ohio All-Star Game... Chose Illinois over North Carolina State, Northwestern, Pittsburgh, Syracuse and others.						
Vontrell Williams	DT	6-2	275	★★★	Chicago, IL	Mt. Carmel
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 defensive tackle... Recorded 39 tackles and 15 sacks as a senior.						

FIGHTING ILLINI SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
37	Austin Abner	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	Fort Thomas, KY
56	Shawn Afryl	OL	6-3	310	So.	Skokie
30	Houston Bates	LB	6-3	240	So.	Covington, LA
41	Zach Becker	FB	6-3	250	Sr.	Homer
38	J.J. Blau	PK	5-10	160	Fr.	Salvisa, KY
55	Chris Boles	OL	6-4	325	Fr.	Toledo, OH
29	Peter Bonahoom	WR	6-2	200	Fr.	Arlington Heights
45	Jonathan Brown	LB	6-1	235	Jr.	Memphis, TN
99	Michael Buchanan	DL	6-6	240	Sr.	Homewood
6	Darrius Caldwell	DL	6-5	210	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
42	Ralph Cooper	LB	6-1	230	So.	Winnsboro, SC
68	Simon Cvijanovic	OL	6-5	285	So.	Cleveland, OH
7	Hayden Daniels	WR	6-4	185	Fr.	Naperville
3	Jon Davis	TE	6-3	230	So.	Lousiville, KY
32	Ean Days	RB	5-11	205	So.	Kingsland, GA
8	Brandon Denmark	LB	6-4	225	Jr.	Tallahassee, FL
48	Henry Dickinson	LB	6-4	215	So.	Memphis, TN
12	Patrick Dunn	PK	5-9	175	So.	Clarendon Hills
60	Tony Durkin	OL	6-3	275	Fr.	Tinley Park
18	Justin DuVernois	P	6-1	190	So.	Plantation, FL
67	Jake Feldmeyer	OL	6-4	280	Jr.	Centerville, OH
6	Josh Ferguson	RB	5-10	180	Fr.	Naperville
75	Pat Flavin	OL	6-7	260	Fr.	Lisle
22	Nick Forzley	DB	5-9	180	So.	Lemont
47	Glenn Foster	DL	6-4	260	Sr.	Chicago
84	Jordan Frysinger	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	Corning, NY
28	Ta'Jarvis Fuller	DB	6-1	190	Fr.	Fort Meyers, FL
26	Justin Green	DB	5-11	195	Sr.	Louisville, KY
57	Kevin Griffin	OL	6-2	260	So.	Orland Park
15	Zepheniah Grimes	STAR	5-11	220	Fr.	Bamberg, SC
24	James Hallendorff	WR	6-2	205	Sr.	Vernon Hills
80	Spencer Harris	WR	6-3	195	Jr.	Greenwood, AR
10	Chase Haslett	QB	6-1	195	Fr.	Clayton, MO
1	Terry Hawthorne	DB	6-0	190	Sr.	East St. Louis
74	Michael Heitz	OL	6-5	295	So.	Vermont
52	Alex Hill	OL	6-3	325	So.	Slidell, LA
95	Jake Howe	DL	6-3	290	So.	McHenry
5	Steve Hull	DB	6-2	200	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
37	Nick Immekus	PK	6-0	220	So.	Wheaton
36	Brad Janitz	P	6-5	215	So.	Cincinnati, OH
69	Ted Karras	OL	6-4	290	Fr.	Indianapolis, IN
53	Richard Kersten	LS	6-2	250	Fr.	Cary
19	Kenny Knight	WR	6-4	200	Fr.	Beverly Hills, MI
81	Jake Kumerow	WR	6-4	190	So.	Bartlett
35	Davontay Kwaaning	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Chicago
59	Tim Kynard	DL	6-3	260	Jr.	Toledo, OH
40	Matt LaCosse	TE	6-6	225	So.	Naperville
12	Ryan Lankford	WR	6-0	175	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
88	Justin Lattimore	TE	6-3	225	Jr.	Tampa, FL
70	Corey Lewis	OL	6-6	305	Sr.	Cresco, PA
87	Tim Lukas	WR	6-4	200	Jr.	Mt. Prospect
23	Ben Mathis	DB	6-3	200	Jr.	Springfield
66	Scott McDowell	OL	6-5	290	Fr.	Hinsdale
13	Sean McGushin	QB	6-2	215	Jr.	St. Charles
15	Darius Millines	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Boynton Beach, FL
29	Kaeman Mitchell	DB	5-9	180	Jr.	Lawrence, KS
58	Kenny Nelson	DL	6-6	245	Fr.	Detroit, MI
4	Patrick Nixon-Youman	DB	5-10	180	Sr.	Jacksonville, FL
31	Nick North	DB	6-1	195	Fr.	Hollywood, FL
17	James Nudera	WR	6-1	205	Fr.	Elmhurst
92	Chris O'Connor	DL	6-5	255	Fr.	Tinley Park
4	Reilly O'Toole	QB	6-4	220	So.	Wheaton
16	Miles Osei	QB	6-0	200	Jr.	Mt. Prospect
46	Zak Pedersen	LS	6-2	230	Sr.	Joliet
33	K.J. Picard	DB	6-1	200	Jr.	Chicago
76	Graham Pocic	OL	6-7	305	Sr.	Lemont
31	Leslie Poole	RB	5-10	170	So.	Schaumburg
34	Alex Porter	LB	6-0	230	So.	Kenilworth
32	Daniel Quintana	STAR	6-2	195	So.	Berwyn
19	Jack Ramsey	DB	5-11	200	Sr.	Chicago
87	Daniel Rhodes	DL	6-3	250	Fr.	Charlotte, NC
39	Nejee Robinson	LB	6-2	225	Jr.	Chicago
20	Fritz Rock	WR	6-1	210	So.	Golden Valley, MN
86	Tim Russell	TE	6-6	220	Jr.	St. Charles
61	Tyler Sands	OL	6-5	305	Sr.	Boyertown, PA
7	Supo Sanni	DB	6-3	220	Sr.	Chicago Heights
2	Nathan Scheelhaase	QB	6-3	195	Jr.	Kansas City, MO
94	Akeem Spence	DL	6-1	305	Jr.	Fort Walton Beach, FL
27	Eaton Spence	DB	6-0	175	Fr.	Belle Glade, FL
54	Justin Staples	DL	6-4	235	Sr.	Lakewood, OH
87	Garrett Stroup	P	5-11	190	Fr.	Rockford
40	Beau Sullivan	LB	5-11	215	Jr.	Decatur
44	Austin Teitsma	DL	6-2	265	So.	Glen Ellyn
24	Earnest Thomas	STAR	6-2	220	So.	Orchard Lake, MI
72	Hugh Thornton	OL	6-5	310	Sr.	Oberlin, OH
98	John Valentine	DL	6-5	255	Fr.	St. Louis, MO
65	Josiah VanderHeyden	OL	6-3	285	So.	Rockford
83	Brennen VanMieghem	PK	6-2	190	Fr.	Metamora
83	Eddie Viliunas	TE	6-4	250	Sr.	LaGrange Park
18	Jeremy Whitlow	WR	6-2	190	Fr.	Cleveland, OH
82	Anthony Williams	WR	6-4	210	So.	Virginia Beach, VA
25	Ashante Williams	STAR	5-11	205	Sr.	Mayfield, OH
89	Evan Wilson	TE	6-6	250	Jr.	Woodstock, GA
90	DeJazz Woods	DL	6-3	255	So.	Tampa, FL
5	Donovonn Young	RB	6-0	215	So.	Houston, TX
26	Taylor Zalewski	PK	6-3	200	Fr.	Orland Park

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
N. Scheelhaase	13	133.4	184	291	8	63.2	2110	13	77	162.3
R. O'Toole	10	86.5	40	67	4	59.7	270	1	20	27.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
A.J. Jenkins	13	90	1276	14.2	8	77	98.2
S. Harris	13	26	226	8.7	1	15	17.4
J. Davis	13	22	187	8.5	1	18	14.4

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
N. Scheelhaase	13	191	903	279	624	3.3	6	37	48.0
J. Ford	12	155	629	29	600	3.9	7	18	50.0
T. Pollard	13	66	488	13	475	7.2	2	61	36.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Brown 108, I. Thomas 85, T. Wilson 81
Tackles for loss: W. Mercilus 22.5, J. Brown 19.5, M. Buchanan 13.5
Sacks: W. Mercilus 16, M. Buchanan 7.5, J. Brown 6
Interceptions: T. Hawthorne 3, T. Henry 2, five tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

New Illinois coach **Tim Beckman** loves rivalries.

His coaching path has allowed him to enjoy one side of the Ohio State-Michigan, Oklahoma-Oklahoma State and Alabama-Auburn rivalries ... as well as both ends of the Toledo-Bowling Green entanglement (which pits MAC teams located 25 miles apart).

"That's college football to me," Beckman said. "That's a very enjoyable thing."

With that in mind, Beckman has gone out of his way to ramp up the rhetoric with protected inter-division foe Northwestern. On the wall in one of Illinois' team rooms, the big placard featuring Northwestern's purple "N" logo has been compromised with a Ghostbusters-esque red circle and slash.

"We call them 'The Team Upstate,'" Beckman said.

Just to clarify, Beckman and Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald consider themselves to be friends. The battle for the Land of Lincoln Trophy isn't likely to turn as uncivil as the rivalries listed above.

• Junior **Miles Osei** remains a quarterback on the official roster, but that's because there's not enough room to list all of his likely positions this fall.

In addition to backing up **Nathan Scheelhaase** and **Reilly O'Toole** at quarterback, Osei will line up at running back, in the slot and everywhere else the Illini need a playmaker. During the spring game, Osei threw 12 passes and caught a team-high four passes for the Orange team.

"It comes down to playing your 11 best," Beckman said.

• At any given time during a practice, Beckman will stop practice and holler "Make a Play!" Then two players will go one-on-one in a drill to determine a winner and a loser.

"Everything we do is competitive," Beckman said. "Stretching is competitive."

Illinois practiced at a rapid tempo under Ron Zook, but Beckman ratcheted up the pace even further.

"We practice fast, man," Beckman said. "If somebody ain't puking in practice, then something's probably wrong."

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"How Nathan Scheelhaase adjusts to yet another offensive scheme will be a critical factor. I like Scheelhaase a lot. I think he is a quarterback who can play in different systems. If it was a pro system, I think he would have a chance. He fit into last year's Paul Petrino-system. And I think he fits into this spread system under Tim Beckman. One of the things Nathan brings is flexibility as it relates to his talents. This isn't the only fit for him, but this is a good fit for him.

"Overall, there's some significant talent to replace. I think Beckman will have a challenge early on until he gets his feet on the ground recruiting-wise. They played really good defense a year ago. It will be hard to duplicate that defensive effort."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Michael Buchanan
Photo by Scott Boehm

this perhaps the team's deepest position.

"Four guys deserve to play," Beckman said.

The offensive line offers more worries about depth and experience. Senior center Graham Pocic (26 career starts) and senior left guard Hugh Thornton (25 starts) are the vets, but one might move to tackle to address a position led by two sophomores and two redshirt freshmen.

DEFENSE

New coordinator Tim Banks fared well in his final year at Cincinnati. His defense ranked second nationally in sacks (45), sixth nationally in rushing yards allowed and 20th in points allowed (20.3 per game).

But Banks inherits a situation in which former coordinator Vic Koenning built a virtual cult among the Illini faithful. Illinois finished seventh nationally in total yards allowed and paced the Big Ten in sacks, tackles for loss and passing yards allowed.

While the Illini no longer have national sacks leader Whitney Mercilus (first-round pick, Houston) and cornerback Tavon Wilson (second-round pick, New England), Banks can count on seven returning starters to help keep the Illini among the Big Ten's elite.

Senior defensive end Michael Buchanan, who posted 7.5 sacks and 13.5 tackles for loss in Mercilus' shadow last season, came to the fore during the spring when he earned the team's Defensive MVP honors.

"Sometimes he doesn't realize how good he can be," Beckman said.

Junior nose tackle Akeem Spence is another veteran with All-Big Ten potential, while returning tackle Glenn Foster bulked up to nearly 300 pounds.

Junior Jonathan Brown is the only full-time returning starter among the linebackers. He shifts from the weakside into the middle with hopes he can improve on last season's 108 stops and 19.5 tackles for loss.

"He's a very good player, but I've been around defenses ranked top 5," Beckman said. "It's just the consistency deal (that remains) with him. He has those games where he makes every play. In one of our scrimmages, he had 15 tackles."

Sophomore Houston Bates (two starts in 2011) and senior Ashante Williams (three starts) will flank Brown.

The secondary features four veterans in senior cornerbacks Terry Hawthorne and Justin Green, senior free safety Supo Sanni and junior Steve Hull. Hawthorne led the pack in production with three interceptions (including one returned for a touchdown in the Kraft Fight Hunter Bowl) and eight pass breakups.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DE Michael Buchanan

Debated entering the NFL Draft after posting 7.5 sacks and 13.5 TFLs in 2011. ... Both totals ranked him among the top 10 in Big Ten. ... Delivered sacks in four straight games from Sept. 10 to Oct. 1. ... Earned the team's Defensive MVP award this spring, which was determined before he produced a monstrous 4.5-sack, 12-tackle performance in the official spring game. ... His speed makes him a potential first-round pick in 2013.

EMERGING STAR

TE Jon Davis

Illinois' top recruit in the Class of 2011 caught just two passes in his first five games. ... Caught a touchdown pass in Week 6, which set the stage for a stretch in which he snagged 18 passes in six Big Ten games. ... The sophomore's combination of size (6-3, 230) and speed makes him a mismatch in the mold of some of Wisconsin's best pass-catching tight ends. ... Could serve as an occasional wideout for an offense long on tight ends, but short on receivers.

TOP NEWCOMER

OLB Ta'Jarvis Fuller

Early enrollee was one of two freshmen to join Illinois for spring ball. ... He earned *Fort Myers* (Fla.) *News-Press* Defensive Player of the Year honors after piling up 166 tackles, six sacks, five forced fumbles and two interceptions for Dunbar High School. ... Jumped on Illinois' two-deep during spring ball at the "STAR" position, which is a linebacker/safety hybrid. ... Fuller (6-1, 190) delivered seven tackles, including two for loss, and two pass breakups during the spring game.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	24.2	81
Rushing	200.4	17
Passing	193.1	87
Total	393.5	47
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	30.2	96
Rushing	154.4	76
Passing	248.8	100
Total	403.3	91
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	83

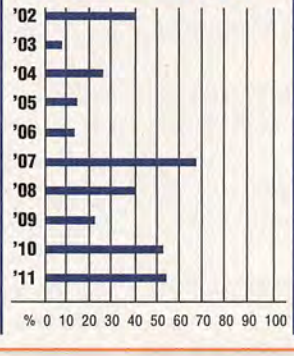
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.5	26
Rushing	246.1	11
Passing	151.0	111
Total	397.1	45
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.5	48
Rushing	130.8	32
Passing	220.5	61
Total	351.3	38
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 8	+ 0.62	22

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.6	91
Rushing	171.7	41
Passing	184.0	91
Total	355.7	85
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.6	15
Rushing	123.9	26
Pass	162.3	3
Total	286.2	7
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 6	- 0.46	95

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

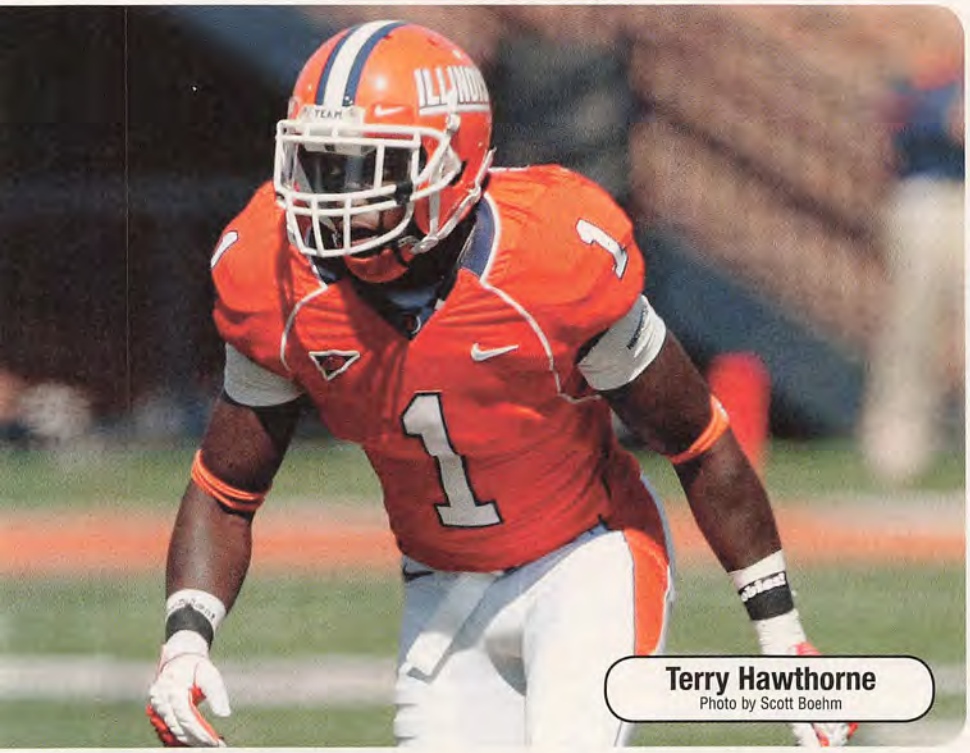


RESULTS

7-6, 2-6

W	ARKANSAS STATE	33-15
W	SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	56-3
W	ARIZONA STATE	17-14
W	WESTERN MICHIGAN	23-20
W	NORTHWESTERN	38-35
W	at Indiana	41-20
L	OHIO STATE	7-17
L	at Purdue	14-21
L	at Penn State	7-10
L	MICHIGAN	14-31
L	WISCONSIN	17-28
L	at Minnesota	7-27
	Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl	
W	vs. UCLA	20-14

PLAYER PROFILE



Terry Hawthorne
Photo by Scott Boehm

CB Hawthorne to Return to WR Roots

The 2009 *Parade* All-American panel declared Terry Hawthorne to be the nation's best receiver in his class. Oklahoma, which would go on to play in the 2009 BCS Championship game, was among the high-profile schools that recruited Hawthorne to play receiver.

The East St. Louis, Ill., native chose to pursue his passion for pass-catching at Illinois ... but he has never enjoyed the chance to line up at wide-out in college. Until now.

Hawthorne, who shifted to cornerback during August of his freshman year after projected starter Miami Thomas wrecked his knee, will be one of the rare athletes who gets to make a difference on both sides of the ball.

Hawthorne's homecoming began when Tim Beckman replaced Ron Zook as head coach in December.

"Zook had offered me to go both ways, but said it was up to me and it never did happen," Hawthorne said.

Beckman took the decision out of Hawthorne's hands.

"When Coach Beckman first got here, we each had to talk with him, give a little background of who we are and what we're about," Hawthorne said. "I told him my background was at wide receiver. He said, 'Well, I might give you a shot this spring.'"

Hawthorne spent the first 10 spring practices at cornerback to pick up new defensive coordinator Tim Banks' schemes, but then he and fellow senior corner Justin Green (who arrived at Illinois as a running back) split the final four sessions between offense and defense.

"We're just trying to find the best fits for the football team," said Beckman, whose top returning receiver had 226 yards in 2011. "He's willing to do what it takes to be the best cornerback and wide receiver."

Expect Hawthorne, who has five interceptions in 17 career starts at corner, to be in the split end rotation behind starter Darius Millines. Hawthorne doesn't expect his lack of repetitions over the last few years to keep him from producing. After all, he's the guy who piled up 51 touchdowns for East St. Louis High School. He's the guy with the *Parade* All-America plaque for his receiving prowess.

"If I score a touchdown on offense, then come back and get an interception on defense," Hawthorne said, "I'm just going to act like I've been there before."

SPECIAL TEAMS

One of the relatively hidden failures of Ron Zook's tenure was the regressing special-teams play.

The Illini ranked last nationally in kick returns (15.7-yard average) and 118th out of 120 teams in punt returns (2.9-yard average) last season. Beckman imported UCF's Tim Salem, who coached some of the nation's finest return teams, to fix these problems.

Ryan Lankford was the primary punt returner last year, while Darius Millines has the most experience as a kick returner.

Illinois finished 80th in net punting (35.7-yard average), but sophomore Justin DuVernois showed marked improvement in the spring. Redshirt freshman Taylor Zalewski and sophomore Nick Immekus, a pair of walk-ons, will battle to fill Derek Dimke's considerable shoes. Dimke drilled 39 of 46 field-goal attempts (85 percent) during his career.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The opener against Western Michigan might not sound dangerous, but the Illini squeezed out a three-point home win last year over the Broncos, who retain star quarterback Alex Carder. The Week 2 trip to Arizona State is another immediate challenge.

There won't be anybody in the Big Ten willing to trade for Illinois' road slate: Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio State and a regular season-ending rivalry game against Northwestern.

— Lindsey Willhite

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	WESTERN MICHIGAN	7-6
Sept. 8	at Arizona State	6-7
Sept. 15	CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	0-11
Sept. 22	LOUISIANA TECH	8-5
Sept. 29	PENN STATE	9-4
Oct. 6	at Wisconsin	11-3
Oct. 13	at Michigan	11-2
Oct. 27	INDIANA	1-11
Nov. 3	at Ohio State	6-7
Nov. 10	MINNESOTA	3-9
Nov. 17	PURDUE	7-6
Nov. 24	at Northwestern	6-7

AKRON | ZIPS

MAC rank: 10 **Record: 1-11** **MAC record: 0-8 (6th, East)** **Stadium: InfoCision Stadium (30,000)**

By Bob Narang

Photo by Kirk Irwin/Getty Images

Jawon Chisholm

"We don't have (65) people who fit into our future, I believe."
— Terry Bowden, on his spring roster

ZIPS at a GLANCE

COACH: Terry Bowden — At Akron: 1st year;
OVERALL: 140-62-2, 18 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Terry Bowden
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chuck Amato

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2005
LAST BOWL: 2005, Motor City
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 6 offense, 5 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Dalton Williams, RB Jawon Chisholm, WR Marquelo Suel, WR Keith Sconiers, DE Albert Presley, FS Devonte Morgan, K A.J. Fox

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Chisholm embraced the challenge from the new coaching staff to become a more versatile tailback. The Zips have talent at wide receiver, but a consistent running game is needed to move the chains and run clock time. On defense, Presley was a bright spot in the spring with his high motor and speed.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Zips simply don't have enough skill players to be a disruptive force on either side of the ball. Bowden stressed his frustration over Akron's lack of size on both the offensive and defensive lines. The Zips left the spring with the quarterback spot wide open.

OFFENSE

New coach Terry Bowden installed a no-huddle attack to help generate some offense. The Zips, who won only two games in the last two years, averaged 14.2 points and 277.8 yards per game in 2011.

Akron's shortage of skill players at running back and wide receiver has been one of the key reasons for the program's derailment since winning the 2005 MAC championship.

Senior quarterback Dalton Williams is battling for the starting job after transferring from Stephen F. Austin. Williams' knowledge of the spread offense gives him the upper hand over returning starter Clayton Moore. Bowden failed to name a starter after spring practice.

The line underwent a complete reconstruction process, but it gains some depth with the return of Vinnie Rizzo and Mitch Straight from injuries.

Tailback Jawon Chisholm is coming off a solid freshman season. The Zips have a seasoned group of wide receivers in Marquelo Suel, A.J. Price and Keith Sconiers to help run the new offense. Suel and Sconiers combined for 81 receptions for 1,056 yards and nine touchdowns last season.

DEFENSE

Akron's defense — and team leadership — suffered a major blow when senior star middle linebacker Brian Wagner decided to transfer to Arizona. Wagner, the nation's top returning tackler, recorded 130-plus tackles in each of his three seasons at Akron.

Veteran coordinator Chuck Amato brings experience and a tough attitude to the defense, but Amato can't create miracles for a unit that lost its best player after allowing 38.5 points last season. In the spring, Amato stressed creating turnovers and putting pressure on the quarterback. The Zips registered just two interceptions and a paltry 11 sacks last year.

Defensive ends Nico Caponi and John Griggs are experienced, but the Zips have some youth at the tackle positions. Senior Troy Gilmer takes over Wagner's middle linebacker spot, flanked by sophomores Jamar Williams and Justin March.

The secondary is another area of concern, but cornerback Bill Alexander is coming off a good spring to team up with senior cornerback Emmanuel Lartey.

SPECIAL TEAMS

A.J. Fox made all eight of his field-goal attempts last year, but Bowden said the position was still open for competition after the spring. Freshman Zach Paul is a leading candidate to win the punting job, with Zack Campbell exhausting his eligibility.

The returning jobs must see improvement after the Zips averaged 17.6 yards per kickoff return and 4.3 yards per punt last year.

OVERVIEW

Bowden is not afraid of ruffling some feathers in pointing out Akron's lack of talent, size and speed. The spread offense will help put some much needed pressure on opposing teams. Bowden made a good impression on players with his personality and dedication to restoring the program. Bowden planned to add some junior college players or late transfers in the summer to help bolster the talent level.

TOP NEWCOMER

DE Albert Presley: The junior college product displayed quality speed off the edge, with good inside moves, causing fits for Akron's offensive line in the spring. "He's got to be disciplined, but he does have the ability. That's what we're looking for," Amato said.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	13	Dalton Williams	6-4	230	Sr.
RB	**44**	**Jawon Chisholm***	**6-0**	**210**	**So.**
WR	**15**	**Marquelo Suel***	**6-3**	**195**	**Sr.**
WR	**3**	**A.J. Price***	**6-4**	**195**	**Sr.**
WR	**35**	**Keith Sconiers***	**6-1**	**185**	**Jr.**
TE	18	Will Fleming	6-4	240	Jr.
LT	76	Jarrod Pughsley	6-4	290	Jr.
LG	52	Vinnie Rizzo	6-3	285	Sr.
C	**65**	**Adam Bice***	**6-4**	**287**	**Sr.**
RG	67	Travis Switzer	6-3	277	So.
RT	64	Mitch Straight	6-5	300	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**90**	**John Griggs***	**6-5**	**273**	**Sr.**
DT	55	Dajour Morris	6-2	305	So.
DT	36	Cody Grice	6-0	256	Fr.
DE	**58**	**Nico Caponi***	**6-2**	**266**	**Jr.**
LB	50	Jamar Williams	5-11	215	So.
LB	**5**	**Troy Gilmer***	**6-1**	**223**	**Sr.**
LB	45	Justin March	6-0	215	So.
CB	21	Bill Alexander	5-9	170	Jr.
CB	**31**	**Emmanuel Lartey***	**5-11**	**181**	**Sr.**
SS	33	Josh Richmond	5-11	190	Sr.
FS	**26**	**Devonte Morgan***	**5-11**	**179**	**So.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**17**	**A.J. Fox***	**5-10**	**211**	**So.**
P	38	Zach Paul	6-3	185	Fr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2012 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	UCF
Sept. 8	at FIU
Sept. 15	MORGAN STATE
Sept. 22	at Tennessee
Sept. 29	MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 6	BOWLING GREEN
Oct. 13	at Ohio
Oct. 20	NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 27	at Central Michigan
Nov. 3	at Kent State
Nov. 10	MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 20	at Toledo

2011 RESULTS

L	at Ohio State	0-42
L	TEMPLE	3-41
L	at Cincinnati	14-59
W	VMI	36-13
L	at Eastern Michigan	23-31
L	FIU	17-27
L	OHIO	20-37
L	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	22-23
L	at Miami (OH)	3-35
L	KENT STATE	3-35
L	at Buffalo	10-51
L	at Western Michigan	19-68

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	14.2	118
Rushing	114.4	100
Passing	163.3	103
Total	277.8	115
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	38.5	116
Rushing	219.6	108
Pass	207.6	39
Total	427.2	94
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-9	-0.75	108

INDIANA HOOSIERS

For more coverage of the Hoosiers, visit indiana.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Seth Littrell | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Doug Mallory, Mike Ekeler** | **STADIUM: Memorial Stadium: 49,225**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
1-11 overall, 0-8 Big Ten (6th, Leaders)

COACH:
Kevin Wilson — At Indiana and overall: 1-11, 1 year

RETURNING STARTERS:
17; 8 offense, 8 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Tre Roberson, RB Stephen Houston, WR Kofi Hughes, C Will Matte, DT Adam Replogle, DT Larry Black Jr., LB David Cooper, S Mark Murphy

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
IU should score capably against most foes, providing the line performs adequately after graduating both tackles. Roberson proved to be a precocious dual-threat quarterback as a true freshman. Houston looked like a Big Ten back. The receiving corps remains capable. The defensive tackle position is strong, experienced and deep.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Indiana's defense was horrid last season and remains a huge question mark. The young Hoosiers mounted almost no pass rush, couldn't disguise their blitzes, didn't tackle well, blew assignments galore and were slow. The infusion of junior college transfers might help, as may a few true freshmen, but probably not enough.

KEY LOSSES:
OT Andrew McDonald, OT Justin Pagan, LB Jeff Thomas, LB Leon Beckum

OVERVIEW:
Kevin Wilson could hardly have had a more deflating debut as a head coach. IU was the only team from a BCS automatic qualifying conference that failed to post a win over any FBS foe last fall. But no team played as many true freshmen and redshirt freshmen (32) as IU did, either. With all that youth, the Hoosiers can really only go in one direction — up.

Bloomington Forecast: Some Wins Moving In?

After a series of spectacularly sunny spring days, a full week's worth of perfect football weather, it rained torrents on the afternoon Indiana conducted its annual Cream and Crimson intrasquad game.

But IU football is accustomed to addressing affliction, whether manifested meteorologically or in more nefarious forms. Coach Kevin Wilson simply adjourned his Hoosiers to Mellencamp Pavilion, their adjacent indoor facility, where they completed a spirited contest.

And, after all, with lightning accompanying the downpour, it wouldn't have served anybody's interests to have a few hundred of the program's most loyal fans fried on Memorial Stadium's metal bleachers.

Just how many fannies IU might see in those bleachers this fall is an open question after Wilson's debut season at the Hoosier helm, a definite downer at 1-11.

Not that realistic Indiana fans didn't expect some rain to fall, metaphorically, during the transition to a new coaching staff attempting to change IU's football culture. And such was the contrast in overt style from predecessor Bill Lynch to Wilson that it amounted to culture shock.

But there are reasons to believe Wilson has assembled coaches worth buying into.

Combined, they have coached in 67 bowl games, including 21 BCS bowls and seven national championship games. They know what big-boy winning football looks like. And if they didn't see much resembling that from the Hoosiers last fall, especially on defense, part of it was due to youth.

Newcomers such as quarterback Tre Roberson and tailback Stephen Houston showed considerable promise, however. Underclassmen accounted for 100 percent of IU's rushing scores (18), completions (211), passing yards (2,393) and passing TDs (10) — not to mention more than 99 percent of its total yards, rushing yards, rushing attempts and kick return yards.

Indiana fans could also find potential solace considering the case of another former coordinator whose first head-coaching job came at a then-struggling Big Ten program. Barry Alvarez went 1-10 during his first season at Wisconsin in 1990. He followed that with successive 5-6 seasons before breaking through in Year Four with a 10-1-1 mark.

Kirk Ferentz had a similar pattern at Iowa, starting 1-10 with the Hawkeyes in 1999, then going 3-9, 7-5 and 11-2. Indiana fans can point more directly to Bill Mallory, who went 0-11 during his first season with the Hoosiers in 1984. He followed up with 4-7, 6-6 and 8-4, inaugurating a run of five bowls in six years for IU.

Time will tell whether Wilson can match those impressive turnarounds. And he'll likely get time to try. Athletic director Fred Glass gave him a seven-year contract.

OFFENSE

Indiana and Arizona swapped offensive coordinators, with Mike Leach disciple Seth Littrell now in Bloomington, hoping to improve the Hoosiers' passing game.

Arizona completed more passes (398) than IU even attempted (378) last season.

Wilson isn't necessarily planning to pass that much more often, but he wants to pass more efficiently. IU runs a spread that should prompt robust completion percentages, with many of the shorter patterns being virtual handoffs, but the Hoosiers connected on just 56 percent of their passes last year. Wilson feels that number should be closer to 70.

Sophomore Tre Roberson, the first true freshman to start at quarterback in Indiana history, took the helm for five games last fall and finished with 937 yards passing and 426 rushing. He often exhibited

Tre Roberson
Photo by Jamie Sabau/Getty Images

dazzling dual-threat potential, but Wilson and Littrell want more consistency and accuracy in Roberson's throws and reads.

"I think Tre's doing great at quarterback," Wilson said after the spring game. "He had a heck of a spring. (Junior college transfer) Cam Coffman's going to make it a competition, which is good. That's not a threat. That's not a putdown. I love the way Tre's growing."

Wilson also cited highly touted incoming freshman Nate Sudfeld, a 6-5 Californian, as a guy who could quickly get in the signal-calling mix.

After the Hoosiers lost out on even more highly touted Gunner Kiel (who initially committed to IU, then LSU, then ended up at Notre Dame), Sudfeld was a welcome addition to the recruiting class after he was initially recruited to Arizona by Littrell. And Wilson already has shown he has no prohibitive qualms about playing a true freshman quarterback.

IU's quarterbacks will have a potent receiving corps out of the spread. Junior flanker Kofi Hughes is a playmaker. Cody Latimer and Jamonne Chester are rangy athletes with starting experience. Shane Wynn is a speedy slot man. Duwyce Wilson missed the spring, recovering from knee surgery, but is potentially the best of the bunch.

Tight end Ted Bolser, who had a bounce-back spring, could emerge as a major force in Littrell's scheme.

Stephen Houston surfaced to average 5.3 yards on 151 carries last fall from IU's one-back sets. D'Angelo Roberts, shifty and tough, and Isaiah Roundtree, a swift Morehead State transfer who had a spectacular spring game, are the backups. Watch out for incoming freshman Tevin Coleman.

Offensive line coach Greg Frey worked wonders last season, forging a functional unit while deploying several freshmen, including starting guards Bernard Taylor and Collin Rahrig. Will Matte is entering his fourth season as the starting center, having started the first 32 games of his IU career before injury temporarily intervened.

DEFENSE

Indiana was last, by sizable margins, in the Big Ten in scoring defense (37.3 points per game) and total defense (458.7 yards per game).

So it was no accident that five of Indiana's six junior college players who enrolled for the spring semester were ticketed for defense. And that doesn't count cornerback Antonio Marshall, who was set to arrive in the summer with considerable plaudits out of Georgia Military College.

It was music to IU fans' ears when Wilson, having viewed the spring's first scrimmage, proclaimed that the defense already looked as good as or better than it had at any point the previous fall.

At the end of the spring, Wilson said:

Stephen Houston
Photo by Michael Hickey-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tre Roberson*	So.	Will swift dual-threat develop more as a passer?	Cam Coffman, So.
RB	Stephen Houston*	Jr.	Emerged as a bona fide Big Ten back at 5.3 ypc.	D'Angelo Roberts, So.
WR	Kofi Hughes*	Jr.	Former QB is a great athlete; makes plays all over field.	Duwyce Wilson, Jr.
WR	Cody Latimer	So.	Tall and talented; surfaced last season before injury.	Jamonne Chester, Jr.*
WR	Shane Wynn	So.	Slot and return man; 1,249 all-purpose yards in 2011.	Nick Stoner, So.
TE	Ted Bolser	Jr.	Rebounded in the spring after a sophomore slump.	Charles Love III, Sr.
LT	Charlie Chapman	Jr.	New man at a crucial spot; had a solid spring.	Gregory Lewis, Fr.
LG	Bernard Taylor*	So.	Impressed as a true freshman; could be a star.	Bill Ivan, So.
C	Will Matte*	Sr.	Four-year starter; calls the shots for a young line.	Collin Rahrig, So.
RG	Collin Rahrig*	So.	Undersized but tough walk-on; coaches love him.	Cody Evers, So.
RT	Peyton Eckert*	So.	Started six games and appeared in eight as a true frosh.	Pete Bachman, So.
K	Mitch Ewald*	Jr.	He is six of 11 from 40-plus yards in his career.	Nick Freeland, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Bobby Richardson*	So.	Started last six games as true frosh, with three sacks.	Javon Cornley, Jr.
DT	Adam Replogle*	Sr.	Four-year starter and anchor inside.	Nick Sliger, Sr.
DT	Larry Black Jr.*	Sr.	Tied with Replogle with 15.5 career TFLs.	Adarius Rayner, Fr.
DE	Ryan Phillis*	So.	Has added 30 pounds; missed spring with injury.	Justin Rayside, Jr.
LB	Chase Hoobler*	So.	Made BTN All-Frosh Team; two sacks vs. Ohio State.	Mike Replogle, So.
LB	David Cooper	So.	JC transfer wowed in the spring; almost instant starter.	Griffen Dahlstrom, Jr.
LB	Jacarri Alexander	Jr.	JC transfer who should start when IU plays its 4-3.	Kyle Kennedy, Fr.
CB	Lawrence Barnett*	Jr.	Had steadier spring; six PBUs last fall; versatile.	Michael Hunter, So.
CB	Greg Heban*	Jr.	Came to IU for baseball; two INTs, six PBUs in 2011.	Kenny Mullen, So.
S	Mark Murphy*	So.	Second on team with 76 tackles as true freshman.	Ryan Thompson, Jr.
S	Alexander Webb	Sr.	Played with (didn't reveal) broken arm vs. Ohio State.	Drew Hardin, So.
P	Mitchell Voss	Jr.	One of several walk-ons vying for the job.	Erich Toth, Fr.

*Returning Starter

HOOSIERS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Tevin Coleman
Indiana was racking up good numbers in its 2012 class, but they needed a headliner. They found that in Coleman. The 6-1, 202-pound back has the size, the speed and the power to be an every-down back in the Big Ten and open up the rest of the offense for future Hoosier ball clubs.

Kevin Davis
Hailing from Indianapolis power Warren Central High, the 5-11, 175-pound Davis provides not only a downfield threat for the Hoosier's passing game, but gives them another in at one of their home state's top programs. Davis is one of two prospects Indiana signed out of Warren Central in the 2012 class.

Antonio Marshall
The junior college transfer played a season at Iowa Western before transferring to Georgia Military College. At both stops he made significant impacts on defense and special teams, and now he brings that playmaking ability to Indiana. A mid-year enrollee, Marshall also had the benefit of practicing with the Hoosiers in the spring.

THE SLEEPER

Jason Spriggs
Many programs hesitated to recruit the 6-7, 265-pound Spriggs because they were not sure whether he was going to fit at tight end or offensive tackle, or stay a 'tweener. As he continued to develop physically, though, Spriggs showed he had the frame to play the offensive tackle position, while still being able to move.

Committments	25
Average Stars	2.72
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	18
★★☆☆☆	7
Total Stars	68
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 11

2013 NEEDS: The 2012 class added bodies across the board for the Hoosiers, but only the quarterback additions set them up for long-term depth. Most important in the 2013 class will be adding depth and talent to the defensive backfield. After that, look for the Hoosiers to add bodies on both the offensive and defensive lines. Seven of the Hoosiers 2012 class additions were junior college transfers. They added the necessary immediate depth, but head coach Kevin Wilson will look for more long term stability in 2013.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jacarri Alexander	LB	6-1	231	★★★	Fort Dodge, IA	Iowa Central C.C.
All-conference selection ... Recorded 78 tackles, six sacks, 4.5 tackles for loss, three forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries in 2011...Had 27 tackles with three sacks and two tackles for loss in 2010...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						
Jacob Bailey	OL	6-5	285	★★	Carmel, IN	Cathedral
All-state selection as a junior and senior...Chose Indiana over Ball State, Bowling Green, Miami (Ohio), Northern Illinois, Temple, Toledo and Western Michigan.						
Dimitric Camiel	OL	6-7	300	★★★	Houston, TX	Westfield
Helped lead team that rushed for 3,187 yards in 2011 and won the region championship...Chose Indiana over Arizona State, Kansas, Mississippi State, Tulane, Utah State and Wyoming.						
Cameron Coffman	QB	6-2	191	★★★	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.
Threw for 2,244 yards and 21 touchdowns in 2011...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						
Tevin Coleman	RB	6-1	202	★★★	Oak Forest, IL	Oak Forest
Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 running back.						
David Cooper	LB	6-1	232	★★★	Coffeyville, KS	Coffeyville C.C.
Had 102 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, two sacks and one interception in 2011...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						
Caleb Cornett	WR	6-3	175	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Ben Davis
Had 47 receptions for 740 yards and six touchdowns as a senior...Honorable mention all-state selection.						
Kevin Davis	WR	5-11	175	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Warren Central
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 84 wide receiver.						
Dan Feeney	OL	6-4	302	★★★	Orland Park, IL	Sandburg
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 49 offensive guard.						
Dawson Fletcher	DB	6-0	190	★★	West Chester, OH	Lakota West
Had 66 tackles, one sack, 6.5 tackles for loss, one interception, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery as a senior...Earned first-team all-conference honors.						
Ralphael Green	DT	6-5	320	★★★	San Antonio, TX	Sam Houston
Four-year starter and three-time all-area selection...Recorded 57 tackles, 7.5 sacks and 21 tackles for loss as a senior.						
Shawn Heffern	DE	6-6	245	★★★	Carmel, IN	Carmel
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com... Recorded 72 tackles, 6.5 sacks, 13 tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one interception as a senior.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Ricky Jones	WR	5-10	170	★★	Sarasota, FL	Booker
Had 58 receptions for 897 yards and 11 touchdowns as a senior...Three-time all-area and all-district selection.						
Tanner Kearns	TE	6-5	225	★★	Lexington, OH	Lexington
Had 20 receptions for 206 yards and three touchdowns as a senior... Finished his career with 47 catches for 482 yards and six TDs.						
Adam Kranda	DE	6-6	240	★★★	New Castle, IN	New Castle Chrysler
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com... Three-time all-area and all-conference selection.						
Nick Mangieri	DE	6-5	240	★★★	Dunlap, IL	Dunlap
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 31 weakside defensive end.						
Antonio Marshall	DB	5-11	190	★★★	Milledgeville, GA	Georgia Military College
Rated as the nation's No. 32 junior college prospect by Rivals.com...Had 44 tackles, six tackles for loss and one interception in 2010.						
Justin Rayside	DE	6-3	251	★★	Riverside, CA	Riverside C.C.
Had 45 tackles, 6.5 sacks and 12 tackles for loss in 2011...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						
Wes Rogers	OL	6-4	285	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Lawrence Central
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 8 offensive center.						
Jason Spriggs	TE	6-7	265	★★★	Elkhart, IN	Concord Community
Recorded 58 tackles, seven sacks and 19 tackles for loss as a senior...All-state selection.						
Nathan Sudfeld	QB	6-5	215	★★★	Modesto, CA	Modesto Christian
Rated as the No. 86 prospect in California by Rivals.com... Threw for 2,332 yards with 31 touchdowns (two rushing) and six interceptions as a senior.						
Ryan Thompson	DB	5-10	190	★★★	Fulton, MS	Itawamba C.C.
Had 44 tackles, four tackles for loss, three interceptions, three pass breakups and one fumble recovery in 2011 ...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						
Alex Todd	DT	6-3	285	★★	Streetsboro, OH	Streetsboro
Had 30 tackles, two tackles for loss, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and one interception as a senior.						
Jordan Wallace	LB	6-0	230	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Warren Central
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com... Had 68 tackles, three sacks, 10 tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and one interception as a senior.						
Tregg Waters	DB	6-0	189	★★	Glendale, AZ	Glendale C.C.
Had 56 tackles, one tackle for loss and one sack in 2011...Enrolled at Indiana in January.						

HOOSIERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
34	Jacarri Alexander	LB	6-1	231	Jr.	Winter Haven, FL
57	Pete Bachman	OL	6-5	281	So.	Cincinnati, OH
23	Lawrence Barnett	CB	5-10	194	Jr.	Fort Wayne
21	Levi Beckett	WR	5-11	193	Fr.	Bluefield, WV
97	Larry Black, Jr.	DT	6-2	310	Sr.	Cincinnati, OH
25	David Blackwell	RB	6-1	213	Jr.	Bloomington
83	Ted Bolser	TE	6-6	255	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
45	Dimitrius Carr-Watson	FB	6-1	239	Jr.	Calumet City, IL
89	Mike Carter	FB	6-1	216	Jr.	Jeffersonville
74	Charlie Chapman	OT	6-6	308	Jr.	South Rockwood, MI
84	Jamonne Chester	WR	6-2	207	Jr.	Detroit, MI
2	Cameron Coffman	QB	6-2	191	So.	Peculiar, MO
42	David Cooper	LB	6-1	232	So.	Lilburn, GA
94	Javon Cornley	DE	6-5	244	Jr.	Columbus, OH
49	Griffen Dahlstrom	LB	6-3	223	Jr.	Coatesville
28	Anthony Davis	RB	6-0	197	So.	Indianapolis
91	Matt Dooley	LS	6-4	253	So.	Phoenix, AZ
59	Peyton Eckert	OL	6-6	292	So.	Arlington Heights, IL
62	Ralston Evans	OL	6-4	305	Fr.	Indianapolis
76	Cody Evers	OL	6-4	306	So.	Little Chute, WI
16	Mitch Ewald	K	5-10	172	Jr.	Naperville, IL
99	Nick Freeland	K/P	6-0	201	Sr.	Indianapolis
8	Drew Hardin	S	6-0	205	So.	Louisville, KY
4	Forisse Hardin	S	6-1	208	So.	Louisville, KY
9	Greg Heban	CB	6-1	185	Jr.	Muncie
87	Leneil Himes	DL	6-1	288	So.	Plymouth
47	Chase Hoobler	LB	6-2	240	So.	Orrville, OH
12	Stephen Houston	RB	6-0	222	Jr.	Little Rock, AR
13	Kofi Hughes	WR	6-2	211	Jr.	Indianapolis
17	Michael Hunter	CB	6-1	177	So.	Monroe, LA
71	Bill Ivan	OT	6-4	291	So.	Charlevoix, MI
29	Jordan Jackson	WR	6-3	234	Fr.	Trafalgar
35	Shaquille Jefferson	S	6-0	208	So.	Lexington, OH
68	David Kaminski	OL	6-4	278	Fr.	Strongsville, OH
51	Kyle Kennedy	LB	6-3	224	Fr.	Indianapolis
63	Jerrell Kirlew	DL	6-3	270	Sr.	Kissimmee, FL
96	John Laihinen	DE	6-4	242	So.	Mequon, WI
24	Landau Lang	CB	5-11	184	So.	Merrillville
3	Cody Latimer	WR	6-3	208	So.	Dayton, OH
79	Gregory Lewis	OL	6-5	293	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, FL
85	Charles Love, III	TE	6-3	243	Sr.	Memphis, TN
60	Will Matte	C	6-2	290	Sr.	Wheaton, IL
15	Jay McCants	WR	6-4	215	So.	Cincinnati, OH
58	Tyler McGuigan	DT	6-2	279	Jr.	Indianapolis
55	Jake Michalek	LB	6-2	233	So.	Midlothian, IL
22	Kenny Mullen	CB	5-10	178	So.	Fort Wayne
37	Mark Murphy	S	6-2	211	So.	Akron, OH
26	Justin Nowak	DB	6-0	188	So.	South Bend
24	Matt Perez	RB	5-11	232	So.	Park Ridge, IL
86	Paul Phillips	TE	6-5	247	So.	Darnestown, MD
25	Ryan Phillis	DE	6-3	262	So.	Boardman, OH
64	Collin Rahrig	OL	6-2	263	So.	South Bend
99	Adarius Rayner	DL	6-2	304	Fr.	Largo, FL
92	Justin Rayside	DE	6-3	251	Jr.	Corona, CA
38	Cameron Razzano	CB	5-9	184	So.	Rochester
90	Jake Reed	TE	6-4	258	So.	Columbus
30	Nathan Reisman	P	6-0	194	Jr.	Dallas, TX
98	Adam Replogle	DT	6-3	289	Sr.	Centerville, OH
46	Mike Replogle	LB	6-2	225	So.	Centerville, OH
95	Bobby Richardson	DE	6-3	274	So.	Tampa, FL
5	Tre Roberson	QB	6-0	183	So.	Indianapolis
20	D'Angelo Roberts	RB	5-10	189	So.	Bloomington
42	Chad Roggeman	P	6-0	177	Jr.	Mishawaka
38	Isaiah Roundtree	RB	5-11	186	So.	Indianapolis
33	Zack Shaw	DE	6-3	239	Fr.	Coshocton, OH
75	Nicholas Sliger	DT	6-3	293	Sr.	Cicero
14	Nick Stoner	WR	6-1	165	So.	Greenwood
73	Bernard Taylor	OL	6-2	291	So.	Detroit, MI
43	Ishmael Thomas	LB	6-5	222	So.	Detroit, MI
19	Ryan Thompson	S	5-10	190	Jr.	Pontotoc, MS
36	Erich Toth	K/P	6-3	193	Fr.	Indianapolis
9	Mitchell Voss	K/P	5-11	182	Jr.	Valparaiso
18	Tregg Waters	S	6-0	189	Jr.	Phoenix, AZ
27	Alexander Webb	S	6-0	189	Sr.	Mequon, WI
6	Brian Williams	CB	6-0	183	So.	Lawrenceville, GA
81	Duwyce Wilson	WR	6-3	197	Jr.	Columbus
1	Shane Wynn	WR	5-7	156	So.	Cleveland, OH
80	Logan Young	WR	6-3	210	So.	Muncie
40	Matt Zakrzewski	FB	6-2	244	So.	Traverse City, MI
21	Jake Zupancic	S	5-11	205	So.	Indianapolis

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
E. Wright-Baker	6	119.4	91	153	4	59.5	1029	4	65	171.5
T. Roberson	9	111.0	81	142	6	57.0	937	3	43	104.1

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Hughes	12	35	536	15.3	3	67	44.7
D. Muhammad	12	26	238	9.2	0	24	19.8
D. Belcher	6	25	286	11.4	1	65	47.7

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
S. Houston	12	151	833	31	802	5.3	8	67	66.8
T. Roberson	9	109	529	103	426	3.9	2	34	47.3
D. Roberts	11	61	277	14	263	4.3	4	33	23.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Thomas 80, M. Murphy 76, G. Heban 62
Tackles for loss: J. Thomas 10.5, A. Replogle 7, two tied with 5.5
Sacks: A. Replogle 4, B. Richardson 3, three tied with 2
Interceptions: G. Heban 2, M. Murphy 1, A. Webb 1, F. Hardin 1

NOTEBOOK

Indiana's football team worked with The Program, a team-building and leadership-development outfit, during the offseason. The response from coaches and players was enthusiastic.

The Program was created by Eric Kapitulik, a former Navy lacrosse player and special operations officer in the Marines, whose team of former athletes and military men put clients through grueling physical and psychological exercises designed to buoy camaraderie, toughness and initiative.

The IU men's basketball team has also utilized The Program, and **Kevin Wilson's** football Hoosiers wouldn't mind emulating the sort of turnaround **Tom Crean's** hoops team experienced last season.

• Wilson said several of his assistants received overtures from other programs during the offseason, including one that would have meant a $200,000 raise, but they opted to stay.

"These are guys who love this town," Wilson said of his assistants. "They love the place, love having their families here, and the families like it, too. They like the young men they're working with. And they think we're going to win."

• IU football has some good hoopsters. Defensive backs **Lawrence Barnett** and **Kenny Mullen** played on Indiana's Class 2A state championship basketball teams at Fort Wayne Luers with current Ohio State hoops standout Deshaun Thomas.

David Blackwell played for Bloomington South's undefeated 2009 Class 4A state champs alongside current IU point guard Jordan Hulls. Incoming freshman **Shawn Heffern** played on Carmel's 4A state title team last March.

• A school record 24 Indiana football players earned Academic All-Big Ten honors last year.

• **Isaiah Roundtree**, a sophomore transfer tailback from Morehead State, who had a dazzling 63-yard TD run in the spring's Cream and Crimson game, was named scout team Player of the Week five times last fall. He was a high school teammate of quarterback **Tre Roberson** at Lawrence Central.

• Sophomore receiver **Nick Stoner** ran the anchor leg for Indiana's 4x100-meter relay team that finished second in the Big Ten Track & Field Championships in May. He led off the 4x400-meter team that was third.

• **Mark Murphy's** father, Mark, was enshrined in the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame in 1998 after serving as a standout safety for the Pack from 1980 through 1991.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"One of the real positives coming out of 2011 was Tre Roberson. He's a guy who Kevin Wilson can build an offense around. It's much like when quarterback Kellen Lewis was at Indiana. What happened when Lewis was there was that they didn't have to have everybody blocked; they didn't have to be perfect. Against the teams that they were as good as, Lewis could win the game virtually by himself. I think Roberson approaches that. So Kevin Wilson's success in 2012 may be how Tre Roberson plays.

"It was a tough year last year defensively. If they run the up-tempo offense, how much are they going to put their defense on the field? The defense obviously needs to improve, and to improve, it needs the offense to possess the ball for more time than it did in 2011."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Kofi Hughes
Photo by Michael Hickey-US PRESSWIRE

"The two best things in the spring were much better alignments and better tackling. The structure of our defense was cleaner. We were in the right places much more consistently, with the proper leverage and angles that creates.

"Our tackling was better, in part, just because those same (returning) guys are coming back bigger and stronger now, but also because we're just in better position to make those tackles. We still have a lot of work to do, but we do see some movement in a positive direction."

IU's defense is strongest, deepest and most experienced in its interior line. Senior tackles Larry Black Jr., and Adam Replogle, prospective four-year starters, had 5.5 and 7 tackles for loss respectively last season. They are ably backed by classmate Nick Sliger.

At virtually every other defensive spot, the Hoosiers are searching for something better.

Bobby Richardson and Ryan Phillis got lots of starts at end but need to provide more pass rush off the edge. The Hoosiers had just 18 sacks last season. IU plays a lot of nickel, but junior college linebackers David Cooper and Jacarri Alexander could both start alongside returnee Chase Hoobler when the Hoosiers are in their 4-3.

The secondary, usually full of freshmen last season, was an unmitigated disaster much of the time.

Lawrence Barnett needs to keep developing the improved consistency he showed in the spring at corner. Greg Heban, who walked on from the IU baseball team and earned a scholarship, started at the other corner last fall, but he or Barnett could be challenged by Marshall and others.

Mark Murphy showed moxie and mettle even while naturally subject to some mistakes as a true freshman safety. Alex Webb, who played through a broken arm to post a career-high 11 tackles at Ohio State, started at the other safety spot down the stretch. Brothers Drew and Forisse Hardin, both of whom had starts last fall are in the picture. So are junior college transfers Ryan Thompson and Tregg Waters.

Speaking of those transfers on defense, Wilson said: "We'll play all those guys. They bring energy."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Mitch Ewald enters his junior season as Indiana's career leader in field-goal percentage (29 of 35, 82.9). He has

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Stephen Houston

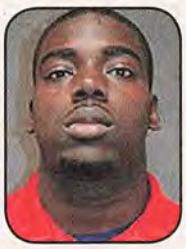
Houston's 711 yards in eight Big Ten starts last season were the most for a Hoosier in league action since BenJarvus Green-Ellis posted 784 in 2003. ... Averaged 5.5 yards per carry in conference play. ... Fumbled once in 151 carries and 170 total touches. ... Has power and speed, with touchdown bursts of 67 yards against Wisconsin and 52 yards against Purdue. ... Caught 17 passes for 164 yards.

EMERGING STAR

WR Kofi Hughes

Terrific all-around athlete, and former star high school quarterback at Indianapolis Cathedral, led IU in receptions last season as a sophomore. He had 35 catches for 536 yards and three touchdowns. ... Also rushed 27 times for 162 yards. ... Had eight catches for 147 yards (and a 34-yard TD) at Ohio State. ... A smart, tough playmaker all over the field. ... Was four-time IU Special Teams Player of the Week as a freshman, when he made 14 tackles on coverage units.

TOP NEWCOMER



LB David Cooper

Mid-year junior college transfer stepped into a starting linebacker job in the spring. ... Had 102 tackles, two sacks and 13 tackles for loss last fall at Coffeyville (Kan.) CC. ... Redshirted in 2010, so he has three seasons of eligibility remaining. ... He and fellow junior college transfer LB Jacarri Alexander could be starters. "He and Jacarri bring instincts, speed, athleticism, physicality, some swagger, the whole nine yards," assistant coach Mark Hagen said this spring.

Photos by Mike Dickbernd, IU Athletics

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	23.5	84
Rushing	117.1	96
Passing	247.9	35
Total	365.0	72
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	29.5	91
Rushing	159.1	79
Passing	241.9	95
Total	401.0	88
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.58	19

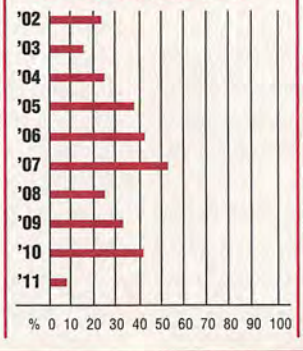
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	27.2	56
Rushing	100.3	112
Passing	287.2	14
Total	387.5	54
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	34.0	102
Rushing	171.8	80
Passing	238.3	93
Total	410.2	90
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 7	- 0.58	101

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	21.4	101
Rushing	161.0	53
Passing	199.4	80
Total	360.4	83
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	37.3	114
Rushing	243.7	118
Pass	215.0	47
Total	458.7	109
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 2	- 0.17	78

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
1-11, 0-8

L	at Ball State	20-27
L	VIRGINIA	31-34
W	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	38-21
L	at North Texas	21-24
L	PENN STATE	10-16
L	ILLINOIS	20-41
L	at Wisconsin	7-59
L	at Iowa	24-45
L	NORTHWESTERN	38-59
L	at Ohio State	20-34
L	at Michigan State	3-55
L	PURDUE	25-33

PLAYER PROFILE

Larry Black Jr.
Photo by AJ Mast/Icon SMI

Black Jr. Adopting Role of Team Leader

When Larry Black Jr., played his first snaps of college football as a freshman defensive tackle at Indiana, he found an infusion of confidence and guidance by simply looking toward either end of the defensive line.

Greg Middleton had broken the school single-season record and led the nation with 16 sacks in 2007. Jammie Kirlew, who would finish tied for third in career sacks and second in career tackles for loss at IU, was destined for the NFL.

"My freshman year, my first start ever was with them, with Kirlew and Middleton," Black recalled. "I was so nervous, but just being out there with those two guys helped.

"I got a sack and two tackles for loss in that game (a win over Eastern Kentucky), and I'll never forget how they helped me, how good it felt to play alongside them. I looked up to those guys so much."

Now it's role-reversal for Black, the fifth-year senior hoping to help guide and inspire a very young Indiana defense. The projected starters flanking him at defensive ends, Bobby Richardson and Ryan Phillis, were among seven freshmen to earn starts for IU's defense last fall.

"Young guys like Richardson, Adarius Rayner and Javon Cornley are looking to me now," Black said. "I have to show the right way to approach things, on and off the field."

On the field, Black and fellow starting defensive tackle Adam Replogle enter their senior campaigns as sage veteran mentors, with stats that lend them credence.

Off the field, Black was named one of the squad's 12 "platoon leaders" this winter, as the Hoosiers were split into teams-within-the-team. Black's unit was dubbed "Team Confidence."

"I was responsible for seven guys, making sure they got to class, were on time for the meetings, all of that," Black said. "I was holding myself accountable, too. It's a great method. We love it. It's been great for our team."

Black not only helps tutor IU's young players, he compares notes with his younger brother, Jibreel, a defensive tackle at Michigan. Both were stars at Cincinnati's Wyoming High School, where they were used to winning. Black naturally would like to get used to that again as he closes his college career.

"We're sick of losing," he said. "We seniors had to take leadership. There aren't many of us, but we're hungry."

never missed in 63 PAT tries.

Ewald is looking to add length to his kickoffs. Senior Nick Freeland, who previously handled kickoff duty, is back from a season lost to injury.

The punting situation is more problematic. Wilson seems disinclined to expend a scholarship on the position. Mitchell Voss, one of many walk-ons in the punting picture, was No. 1 in the spring.

IU's coverage units have traditionally suffered from the program's chronic lack of depth, with little speed and talent left over for special teams. Wilson feels recent above-par recruiting classes (by IU standards at least) should help.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

This fall's docket doesn't look especially conducive to a breakthrough. The 2013 schedule, with its eight home games, seems a better bet.

IU's 2012 conference home games are all against perennial powers — Ohio State, Michigan State, Wisconsin and Iowa — while league foes perhaps closer to the Hoosiers' current level are road assignments.

Still, those Big Ten home games may give Indiana a better shot to pull off a truly eyebrow-raising, program-igniting upset.

The non-conference assignments includes road trips to Massachusetts for a game at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, and an Oct. 20 visit to Navy, which should provide a starkly contrasting challenge amid IU's Big Ten slate.

— Andy Graham

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	INDIANA STATE	6-5
Sept. 8	vs. Massachusetts (Boston)	5-6
Sept. 15	BALL STATE	6-6
Sept. 29	at Northwestern	6-7
Oct. 6	MICHIGAN STATE	11-3
Oct. 13	OHIO STATE	6-7
Oct. 20	at Navy	5-7
Oct. 27	at Illinois	7-6
Nov. 3	IOWA	7-6
Nov. 10	WISCONSIN	11-3
Nov. 17	at Penn State	9-4
Nov. 24	at Purdue	7-6

BALL STATE | CARDINALS

MAC rank: 6 **Record: 6-6** **MAC record: 4-4 (T-4th, West)** **Stadium: Scheumann Stadium (22,500)**

By Doug Zaleski

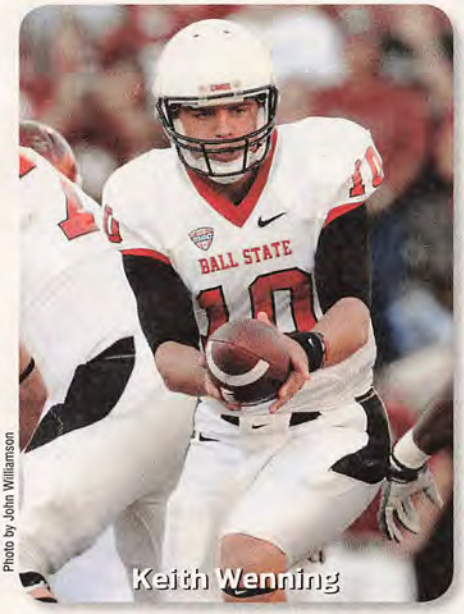


Photo by John Williamson

Keith Wenning

"We challenged our receivers to step up and be those (big-play) guys for us."

— Coach Pete Lembo, on spring practice

CARDINALS at a GLANCE

COACH: Pete Lembo — At Ball State: 6-6, 1 year
OVERALL: 85-42, 11 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Rich Skrosky
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Bateman

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1996
LAST BOWL: 2008, GMAC
RETURNING STARTERS: 15; 8 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Keith Wenning, TB Jahwan Edwards, MLB Travis Freeman, CB Jason Pinkston, DT Nathan Ollie

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Ball State will have to be carried by its offense. The unit made nice strides in its first season under Lembo, and more of the playbook is being installed this season. Good special teams play is always a bonus, and the Cardinals have units that should rank among the best in the MAC.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Defense is a concern again this year. The Cardinals need consistent play from two new ends, and their two safeties will be first-time starters. The unit has to tackle better and limit big plays, areas that were a major issue a year ago.

OFFENSE

Ball State was somewhat limited on offense last year, as its young players tried to absorb the teachings of new coach Pete Lembo and his coaching staff.

There should be fewer shackles on the attack this season, as Ball State's goal during the offseason was to transform the offense to one that would pack a bigger punch and create those game-changing plays that came too infrequently last season.

The Cardinals showed some of that kind of improvement during the spring game, with four passes that combined to produce 216 yards.

Much of the progress can be traced to the experience of junior quarterback Keith Wenning, who will start in 2012 for the third straight year. He has a big, experienced offensive line in front of him and receiving targets in Willie Snead, Jamill Smith, Connor Ryan, and Jack Tomlinson, who show explosiveness.

The multiple, no-huddle offense will feature lots of passing, but a nice stable of running backs, headed by Jahwan Edwards, helps to give the Cardinals diversity in their attack.

DEFENSE

The Cardinals had the worst defense in the Mid-American Conference last season, ranking at or near the bottom in every significant category. Some of the issues were related to injuries, but for the most part, the group was not fundamentally sound.

To complicate the process in 2012, Ball State lost three key pieces of its defense with the graduation of safeties Sean Baker and Josh Howard, and the academic ineligibility of outside linebacker Aaron Morris. Baker and Morris combined to make 210 tackles last year.

One of the main points of emphasis will be a stronger pass rush. The Cardinals' defensive line generated only 12 sacks last year. Nathan Ollie is a strong rusher at defensive tackle, and linebackers Tony Martin and Kenneth Lee will be counted on to provide pressure from the outside.

Middle linebacker Travis Freeman can make plays sideline to sideline, and he enters his senior year with 336 career tackles.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ball State had one of the top special teams units in the MAC last year, and much of that was helped by the consistency of returning kicker Steven Schott and punter Scott Kovanda.

Schott was among the most accurate kickers in the MAC, making 15 of 20 field-goal attempts. Kovanda had his best year in 2011, averaging 43.5 yards a punt.

OVERVIEW

Ball State was a surprise team last year with a 6-6 record, narrowly missing out on a bowl bid (it was one of two eligible teams not selected). With a veteran squad returning, the Cardinals figure to improve, but their record might not show it. Ball State has a difficult non-conference slate with South Florida at home and road games against Clemson, Army and Indiana. The Cardinals' MAC schedule includes two of the East Division's best teams (Ohio and Miami).

TOP NEWCOMERS

SS Chris Pauling: An early enrollee, Pauling made an immediate impact this spring at a position that lacked a starter and depth. Coach Pete Lembo said at the end of spring practice that it looked as if Pauling had been at Ball State for three years instead of three months.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**10**	**Keith Wenning***	**6-3**	**224**	**Jr.**
RB	**38**	**Jahwan Edwards***	**5-10**	**230**	**So.**
WR	3	Willie Snead	5-11	191	So.
WR	2	Jamill Smith	5-8	138	Jr.
WR	81	Connor Ryan	6-1	188	Jr.
TE	**88**	**Zane Fakes***	**6-3**	**227**	**Jr.**
QT	**77**	**Austin Holtz***	**6-5**	**3-4**	**Sr.**
QG	**79**	**Kitt O'Brien***	**6-5**	**319**	**Sr.**
C	**73**	**Dan Manick***	**6-4**	**286**	**Sr.**
SG	**70**	**Jordan Hansel***	**6-4**	**326**	**Jr.**
ST	72	Cameron Lowry	6-6	293	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	5	Jonathan Newsome	6-3	245	Jr.
DT	**92**	**Nathan Ollie***	**6-1**	**296**	**Jr.**
NT	97	Donovan Jarrett	6-3	317	Sr.
DE	52	Nick Miles	6-2	259	So.
LB	**47**	**Tony Martin***	**6-0**	**222**	**Sr.**
LB	**8**	**Travis Freeman***	**6-0**	**238**	**Sr.**
LB	58	Kenneth Lee	6-2	219	Sr.
CB	**24**	**Jeffery Garrett***	**5-9**	**178**	**Jr.**
CB	**6**	**Jason Pinkston***	**6-1**	**185**	**Sr.**
SS	25	Chris Pauling	5-9	186	Fr.
FS	29	Brian Jones	5-10	194	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**14**	**Steven Schott***	**6-0**	**171**	**Sr.**
P	**18**	**Scott Kovanda***	**6-3**	**207**	**Sr.**

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	EASTERN MICHIGAN
Sept. 8	at Clemson
Sept. 15	at Indiana
Sept. 22	SOUTH FLORIDA
Sept. 29	at Kent State
Oct. 6	NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Oct. 13	WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 20	at Central Michigan
Oct. 27	at Army
Nov. 6	at Toledo
Nov. 14	OHIO
Nov. 23	at Miami (OH)

2011 RESULTS

W	INDIANA	27-20
L	at South Florida	7-37
W	BUFFALO	28-25
W	ARMY	48-21
L	at Oklahoma	6-62
L	TEMPLE	0-42
W	at Ohio	23-20
W	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	31-27
L	at Western Michigan	35-45
W	at Eastern Michigan	33-31
L	at Northern Illinois	38-41
L	TOLEDO	28-45

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.3	72
Rushing	138.4	77
Passing	241.0	53
Total	379.4	68
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	34.7	103
Rushing	226.0	113
Pass	284.3	115
Total	510.3	119
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-1	-0.08	67

IOWA HAWKEYES

For more coverage of the Hawkeyes, visit iowa.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Greg Davis | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Phil Parker** | **STADIUM: Kinnick Stadium: 70,585**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
7-6, 4-4 Big Ten (4th, Legends)

COACH:
Kirk Ferentz — At Iowa: 96-66, 13 years; overall: 108-87, 16 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
9; 5 offense, 3 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB James Vandenberg, WR Keenan Davis, WR Kevonte Martin-Manley, TE C.J. Fiedorowicz, LB James Morris, LB Christian Kirksey, CB Micah Hyde, CB B.J. Lowery, FS Tanner Miller

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Vandenberg has an accurate arm and thrived more in the shotgun spread than under center last season. Davis has said he will play to the players' strengths. Fiedorowicz is a possible star at tight end. Hyde and Lowery are an excellent cover combination.

PRIMARY PROBLEMS:
DE Dominic Alvis is the Hawkeyes' top returning sack man — but he had just 1.5 sacks in 2011. Iowa's defensive line is going to be young and that will be tough to overcome in the Big Ten. Running back is an issue, again. Incoming freshmen Barkley Hill and Greg Garmon will be counted on the minute they arrive in Iowa City.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Marcus Coker, DT Mike Daniels, DE Broderick Binns, P Eric Guthrie

OVERVIEW:
Iowa is a young team with two first-year coordinators and a revamped coaching staff. This clearly is a program in transition, and it could be a bumpy first year. Vandenberg is a steady hand at quarterback, but the running back position is young. The defense will be nearly new up front. Iowa can't afford early stumbles or bowl eligibility might be a tough get in Ferentz 2.0.

Young Hawkeyes Enter Season with Revamped Staff

Iowa football feels a little like a presidential campaign.

"Change" has been a popular word during an offseason in which Kirk Ferentz's coaching staff turned over drastically for the first time in his Hawkeyes' tenure.

Through Ferentz's first 13 seasons in Iowa City, he had a total of only 15 assistant coaches, a picture of stability. Next fall, only two of the nine coaches on Iowa's staff will be in the same positions they held in 2011.

The headline changes are offensive coordinator Greg Davis and defensive coordinator Phil Parker. Davis comes to Iowa after a year out of the game upon his departure from Texas in 2010. Parker spent 24 seasons at Toledo and Iowa as a secondary coach before his promotion.

Brian Ferentz, Kirk's son and a former Iowa offensive lineman, is in as offensive line coach after four years with the New England Patriots, including a successful run as tight ends coach. LeVar Woods, another former Hawkeye who had a seven-year career as a linebacker in the NFL, takes over the linebackers.

Former offensive line coach Reese Morgan moves over to defensive line. Former linebackers coach Darrell Wilson moves to the secondary. Tight ends coach Eric Johnson will concentrate on his position as recruiting coordinator and assist with the defensive line, while graduate assistant David Raih handles the tight ends.

Wide receivers coach Erik Campbell and running backs coach Lester Erb didn't have to change offices.

Beyond the physical changes, which also includes a $53 million indoor football practice area and football facilities, how Iowa plays football is up in the air.

Kirk Ferentz acknowledged he looked under the hood and gave the program a thorough examination, including the playbook.

"We'll look a little different defensively next year. It's not going to be wholesale different," Ferentz said.

"I think we will be different offensively, too. ... We were at that point where we really wanted to go back and look — we do this every year — but I thought in all regards to our program, we needed to really look at things as thoroughly as possible."

The overarching theme has been being physical.

"I know as someone who is very interested in running the football, the identity of this football team and this program has been built on being tough, being physical ...," Brian Ferentz said. "That's not going to change, but are we going to go out there and be the same? No, no."

OFFENSE

Quarterback James Vandenberg bonded with new coordinator Greg Davis in the spring and will be in the hot seat when the Hawkeyes use a tweaked playbook in pressure situations this fall.

Vandenberg is interested in med school or physical therapy, so he's qualified in the mental part of the game, helping to translate that playbook to his teammates. His physical game is there, too.

Vandenberg passed for 3,022 yards, with 25 touchdowns and just seven interceptions, last season. His 404 attempts were the second most in Iowa history. He didn't lift the Iowa offense against the Big Ten's better defenses, but that was an offense-wide failure, not just his.

It wouldn't be Iowa without a question at running back. Marcus Coker, who finished second in the Big Ten with

James Vandenberg
Photo by Michael Marti

1,384 yards last season, transferred after an investigation for an alleged sexual assault. Sophomore Jordan Canzeri, who took over for Coker, suffered a torn ACL on the third day of spring practice.

That leaves sophomores Damon Bullock and De'Andre Johnson. Bullock is the frontrunner, but incoming freshmen Greg Garmon and Barkley Hill will be contenders for playing time when they step on campus. Each back has something to work with, but it'll be "running back by committee" until someone emerges.

Davis has said from Day 1 that his intention isn't to fit the Texas offense around Iowa players, but to mold what Iowa does around what its players can do. Still, the difference that jumps out at him is the speed on the outside.

"We need to be faster," Davis said. "We need to be able to stretch the field a little better. There is no question about that."

That responsibility falls to senior wide receiver Keenan Davis. He had a breakout junior season, catching 50 passes for 713 yards and four touchdowns. He was third chair two years ago and second last season when Marvin McNutt set several Iowa receiving records.

Kevonte Martin-Manley is the No. 2 receiver. He caught 30 passes as a redshirt freshman. Iowa's experience thins out considerably from there. The door is open for a true freshman with speed, and Tevaun Smith might be the one.

Junior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz earned major praise during the spring, with Kirk Ferentz saying, "He's clearly at a different level." Fiedorowicz caught 16 passes last season.

With Riley Reiff's early departure to the NFL, Iowa needs two tackles. Junior Brett Van Sloten and sophomore Brandon Scherff sit atop the depth chart. Scherff changed his body during the offseason and is a lean 310 pounds.

James Ferentz, Kirk's son and Brian's brother, returns as a three-year starter at center. Redshirt freshman Austin Blythe turned heads at guard during the spring.

DEFENSE

The new defensive boss is Phil Parker, who replaces Norm Parker, who retired last December.

Iowa's defense has a different linebackers coach in LeVar Woods, whose hiring gave Darrell Wilson different duties, flipping from linebackers to defensive backs. And Reese Morgan, 61, switched to the defensive line after nine seasons as offensive line coach. He was seen this spring running through some technique in the office with former Hawkeye Aaron Kampman, now a defensive end with the Jacksonville Jaguars.

It remains to be seen how different the scheme is for Iowa's defense

James Morris
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	James Vandenberg*	Sr.	Skills should fit Greg Davis' offense.	Jake Rudock, Fr.
RB	Damon Bullock	So.	Iowa needs to take advantage of his versatility.	Greg Garmon, Fr.
FB	Brad Rogers*	Jr.	Heart ailment stole nearly all 2011.	Jonathan Gimm, Sr.
WR	Keenan Davis*	Sr.	Had a breakout 2011, but needs consistency.	Don Shumpert, Jr.
WR	Kevonte Martin-Manley	So.	Slated for touches in the slot.	Steven Staggs, Sr.
TE	C.J. Fiedorowicz	Jr.	All systems go for the 6-7, 265-pounder.	Zach Derby, Sr.
LT	Brandon Scherff	So.	Changed body to a lean 310 during offseason.	Andrew Donnal, So.
LG	Matt Tobin*	Sr.	Returns as a starter after hot/cold 2011.	Drew Clark, Jr.
C	James Ferentz*	Sr.	Makes up for lack of size with perfect technique.	Eric Simmons, So.
RG	Austin Blythe	Fr.	State wrestling champ; excellent technician.	Conor Boffeli, Jr.
RT	Brett Van Sloten	Jr.	Lean, athletic, but will he hold up to bull rush?	Nolan MacMillan, Jr.
K	Mike Meyer*	Jr.	Finished 2011 on a 2-of-6 streak.	Marshall Koehn, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Dominic Alvis	Jr.	Had moments before ACL injury last season.	Melvin Spears, Fr.
DT	Steve Bigach	Sr.	Thick, good feet; needs to shed blocks better.	Carl Davis, So.
DT	Darian Cooper	Fr.	Quick, could provide an inside push.	Louis Trinca-Pasat, So.
DE	Joe Gaglione	Sr.	Grabbed the job in the spring; has some punch.	Riley McMinn, Fr.
LB	James Morris*	Jr.	Instinctual player who's built to survive traffic.	Quinton Alston, So.
LB	Christian Kirksey*	Jr.	Could be Iowa's best defender.	Travis Perry, Fr.
LB	Anthony Hitchens	Jr.	One of Iowa's most explosive players.	Marcus Collins, So.
CB	Micah Hyde*	Sr.	Shutdown potential; a standout three-year starter.	Greg Castillo, Sr.
CB	B.J. Lowery	Jr.	He's a talented cover corner.	Jordan Lomax, So.
SS	Nico Law	So.	If the big hits come, he'll be the fan favorite.	Tommy Donatell, Sr.
FS	Tanner Miller	Jr.	Can make plays and should be better vs. the run.	John Lowdermilk, So.
P	John Wienke	Sr.	Former quarterback has never punted in a game.	Connor Kornbrath, Fr.

*Returning Starter

HAWKEYES RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Greg Garmon
Iowa has gone through a series of unfortunate events with the running back position, the most recent being the decision by 2011's leading rusher Marcus Coker to transfer. The Hawkeyes are looking for more stability at the position and the 6-2, 195-pound Garmon can provide that.

Jaleel Johnson
Physically, the 6-4, 300-pound Johnson has all the tools to be a dominant interior defensive lineman in the Big Ten. He has an athletic build, a great first step and the strength to battle in the trenches. The only thing he needs to develop is a consistent motor.

Connor Kornbrath
Kickers sometimes get thrown in as impact players when a class is underwhelming, but that is not the case with Kornbrath. Rated as one of the nation's top punters, the 6-6, 210-pound prospect from West Virginia has a big leg and is expected to come in and win the job as a true freshman.

THE SLEEPER

Nate Meier
As a senior, Meier averaged 14.2 yards per carry and totaled 57 touchdowns on offense while notching 112 tackles and 11 sacks on defense. The reason why Iowa was his only BCS offer was the 6-2, 235-pound Meier did that playing 8-man football, but you cannot fault a kid for the talent he plays against.

Committments	24
Average Stars	2.96
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	4
★★★☆☆	15
★★☆☆☆	5
Total Stars	71
National Rank: 43	Big Ten: 6

2013 NEEDS: Three of the Hawkeye's four highest ranked prospects in the 2012 class were linemen, but needs still exist on both the offensive and defensive lines going into the 2013 class. Expect the Hawkeyes to start off their recruiting efforts there, and they will benefit from deep pools of talent at those positions in some of their go-to recruiting territories. Talent is also low at the wide receiver position, and head coach Kirk Ferentz and staff will be looking for playmaking pass catchers.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
C.J. Beathard	QB	6-2	180	★★★	Franklin, TN	Battle Ground Academy
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Switched to Iowa from his original commitment to Ole Miss.						
Kevin Buford	DB	5-10	170	★★	Canton, MI	Canton
First-team all-state, all-metro and all-conference selection as a senior... Totaled 891 all-purpose yards and eight touchdowns as a senior.						
Sean Draper	DB	6-0	165	★★★	Cleveland, OH	Glenville Academic Campus
Rated as the No. 48 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 53 cornerback.						
Faith Ekakitie	DE	6-2	255	★★★★	Lake Forest, IL	Lake Forest Academy
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 14 strongside defensive end...Participated in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl.						
Maurice Fleming Jr.	DB	6-1	185	★★★	Chicago, IL	Curie
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 54 cornerback.						
Greg Garmon	RB	6-2	195	★★★★	Erie, PA	McDowell
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 running back.						
Barkley Hill	RB	6-0	190	★★★	Cedar Falls, IA	Cedar Falls
Rushed for 2,493 yards and 40 touchdowns as a senior...Chose Iowa over Iowa State.						
Jaleel Johnson	DT	6-4	300	★★★★	Lombard, IL	Montini
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 13 defensive tackle...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Mitch Keppy	OL	6-5	287	★★★	Port Byron, IL	Riverdale
Rated as the No. 23 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...First-team all-state selection as a senior.						
George Kittle	WR	6-4	200	★★★	Norman, OK	Norman
Earned all-state, all-district and all-conference honors as a senior...Had 26 receptions with five touchdowns as a senior.						
Connor Kornbrath	K	6-6	210	★★	Bridgeport, WV	Bridgeport
Rated as the No. 2 prospect in West Virginia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 12 kicker.						
Ruben Lile	ATH	6-3	200	★★★	Detroit, MI	Cass Tech
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 34 athlete.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Greg Mabin	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Calvary Christian Academy
Caught 52 passes for 877 yards and 15 touchdowns as a senior...Had 58 catches for 1,094 yards and 12 TDs as a junior.						
Nate Meier	LB	6-2	235	★★	Tabor, IA	Fremont Mills
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Iowa by Rivals.com...Had 112 tackles and 11 sacks as a senior.						
Anthony Morgan	DB	6-1	185	★★★	Plano, TX	Prestonwood Christian Academy
Rated as the nation's No. 58 cornerback by Rivals.com...Chose Iowa over Arizona and Stanford.						
Drew Ott	DE	6-4	235	★★★	Giltner, NE	Giltner
Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Nebraska by Rivals.com...Recorded 122 tackles as a senior.						
Reid Sealby	OL	6-4	250	★★	Byron, IL	Byron
Earned first-team all-conference honors as a junior and senior... Selected to compete in Illinois Shrine Game.						
Eric Simmons	OL	6-3	300	★★★	Council Bluffs, IA	Iowa Western C.C.
Earned first team all-conference honors in 2011...Enrolled at Iowa in January.						
Tevaun Smith	WR	6-2	186	★★★	Kent, CT	Kent School
Participated in USA vs. World All-American Game...Chose Iowa over Connecticut and Temple.						
Cody Sokol	QB	6-2	205	★★★	Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale C.C.
First-team all-conference and all-region selection in 2011...Enrolled at Iowa in January.						
Laron Taylor	LB	6-0	205	★★	Detroit, MI	Cass Tech
Earned first-team all-state honors as a senior...Recorded 120 tackles, 20 tackles for loss and two sacks as a senior.						
Daumantas Venckus	DE	6-4	220	★★★	Weston, FL	Cypress Bay
Recorded 105 tackles with 16 sacks as a senior... Named second-team all-state.						
Ryan Ward	OL	6-6	270	★★★★	New Lenox, IL	Providence Catholic
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 18 offensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Cameron Wilson	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Dublin, OH	Jerome
Rated as the No. 34 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 79 wide receiver.						

HAWKEYES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
52	Quinton Alston	LB	6-1	224	So.	Sicklerville, NJ
79	Dominic Alvis	DL	6-4	265	Jr.	Logan
5	Kyle Anderson	QB	6-3	210	Fr.	Ames
54	Steve Bigach	DL	6-3	282	Sr.	Cleveland, OH
40	Marcus Binns	RB	5-11	210	So.	St. Paul, MN
63	Austin Blythe	OL	6-3	275	Fr.	Williamsburg
59	Conor Boffeli	OL	6-5	290	Jr.	West Des Moines
32	Damon Bullock	RB	6-0	195	So.	Mansfield, TX
22	Torrey Campbell	DB	5-11	183	Fr.	Naples, FL
33	Jordan Canzeri	RB	5-9	180	So.	Troy, NY
2	Greg Castillo	DB	5-11	187	Sr.	Mount Laurel, NJ
18	John Chelf	WR	5-11	175	So.	Iowa City
50	Drew Clark	OL	6-4	288	Jr.	Marion
55	Marcus Collins	LB	6-0	215	So.	Yeadon, PA
97	Darian Cooper	DL	6-2	280	Fr.	Elkridge, MD
23	Jordan Cotton	WR	6-1	185	Jr.	Mount Pleasant
33	Adam Cox	FB	5-11	210	Fr.	Chana, IL
71	Carl Davis	DL	6-5	310	So.	Detroit, MI
6	Keenan Davis	WR	6-3	215	Sr.	Cedar Rapids
31	Andre Dawson	RB	6-2	207	Jr.	Cedar Rapids
85	Zach Derby	TE	6-3	240	Sr.	Iowa City
37	Shane DiBona	LB	6-2	235	Jr.	Duxbury, MA
13	Tom Donatell	LB	6-2	205	Sr.	Duluth, GA
78	Andrew Donnal	OL	6-7	302	So.	Monclova, OH
87	Jake Duzey	TE	6-4	235	Fr.	Troy, MI
53	James Ferentz	OL	6-2	284	Sr.	Iowa City
86	C.J. Fiedorowicz	TE	6-7	265	Jr.	Johnsburg, IL
26	Steve Fiorella	RB	5-9	175	Fr.	Chicago, IL
36	Cole Fisher	OLB	6-2	218	Fr.	Omaha, NE
50	Palmer Foster	OLB	6-3	210	So.	Davenport
99	Joe Gaglione	DL	6-4	264	Sr.	Novelty, OH
57	Tommy Gaul	OL	6-3	264	So.	Des Moines
47	Dakota Getz	LB	6-4	235	Jr.	Macon, IL
92	Jonathan Gimm	FB	6-3	240	Sr.	Houston, TX
9	Blake Haluska	WR	6-4	210	So.	Carroll
82	Ray Hamilton	TE	6-5	248	So.	Strongsville, OH
17	Raymond Hammond	DB	5-8	170	Fr.	Chicago, IL
98	Mike Hardy	DL	6-5	270	So.	Appleton, WI
84	Jacob Hillyer	WR	6-4	205	Fr.	Somerset, TX
31	Anthony Hitchens	LB	6-1	224	Jr.	Lorain, OH
18	Micah Hyde	CB	6-1	190	Sr.	Fostoria, OH
30	De'Andre Johnson	RB	5-8	200	So.	Miami, FL
20	Christian Kirksey	LB	6-2	220	Jr.	St. Louis, MO
1	Marshall Koehn	PK	6-0	160	Fr.	Solon
69	Ryan Kolka	LS	6-0	208	Fr.	St. Charles, IL
61	Casey Kreiter	LS	6-3	250	Jr.	DeWitt
80	Henry Krieger-Coble	TE	6-4	235	Fr.	Mount Pleasant
22	Brian Kroll	DB	5-11	196	So.	Whitefish Bay, WI
21	Nico Law	DB	6-1	195	So.	Clinton, MD
27	Jordan Lomax	DB	5-10	190	So.	Upper Marlboro, MD
48	John Lowdermilk	DB	6-2	203	So.	Kensington, OH
19	B.J. Lowery	DB	5-11	188	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
93	Nathan Lyman	DL	6-3	280	Jr.	Grundy Center
76	Nolan MacMillan	OL	6-6	290	Jr.	Toronto, Ontario
11	Kevonte Martin-Manley	WR	6-0	205	So.	Pontiac, MI
66	Casey McMillan	OL	6-4	305	Sr.	Billings, MT
94	Riley McMinn	DE	6-7	245	Fr.	Rochester, IL
96	Mike Meyer	K	6-2	185	Jr.	Dubuque
35	Matt Meyers	FB	6-2	225	So.	Plainfield, IL
5	Tanner Miller	DB	6-2	201	Jr.	Kalona
44	James Morris	LB	6-2	230	Jr.	Solon
8	Trent Mossbrucker	PK	6-0	204	Sr.	Mooresville, IN
15	Jonny Mullings	P	6-3	210	So.	Canberra, Australia
29	Nick Nielsen	WR	6-3	210	Sr.	Humboldt
16	Jamal Overton	DB	5-9	180	Fr.	Rancho Cucamonga, CA
39	Travis Perry	DB	6-3	230	Fr.	Urbandale
42	Macon Plewa	LB	6-2	225	Fr.	Franklin, WI
43	Jim Poggi	LB	6-2	218	So.	Towson, MD
41	Jacob Reisen	FB	6-2	231	Jr.	Iowa City
38	Brad Rogers	FB	5-10	230	Jr.	Toledo, OH
15	Jake Rudock	QB	6-3	200	Fr.	Weston, FL
68	Brandon Scherff	OL	6-5	310	So.	Denison
8	Don Shumpert	WR	6-3	190	Jr.	St. Louis, MO
58	Eric Simmons	OL	6-3	300	So.	Madrid
10	Collin Sleeper	DB	6-2	200	Sr.	Solon
30	Gavin Smith	DB	5-10	175	Jr.	North Liberty
19	Cody Sokol	QB	6-2	205	Jr.	Phoeniz, AZ
49	Melvin Spears	DE	6-2	255	Fr.	Allen, TX
83	Steven Staggs	WR	6-3	195	Sr.	Oskaloosa
40	Jack Swanson	DB	5-11	200	Sr.	Naples, FL
60	Matt Tobin	OL	6-6	290	Sr.	Worthington
90	Louis Trinca-Pasat	DL	6-3	270	So.	Chicago, IL
75	Dean Tsopanides	DL	6-2	240	Fr.	Torrington, CT
70	Brett Van Sloten	OL	6-7	292	Jr.	Decorah
16	James Vandenberg	QB	6-3	212	Sr.	Keokuk
65	Jordan Walsh	OL	6-4	270	Fr.	Glendale Heights, IL
28	Mark Weisman	FB	6-0	225	So.	Buffalo Grove, IL
14	John Wienke	QB	6-5	220	Sr.	Tuscola, IL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Vandenberg	13	138.5	237	404	7	58.7	3022	25	88	232.5
A.J. Derby	9	92.0	3	6	0	50.0	30	0	15	3.3

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. McNutt	13	82	1315	16.0	12	88	101.2
K. Davis	12	50	713	14.3	4	47	59.4
K. Martin-Manley	13	30	323	10.8	3	25	24.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Coker	12	281	1417	33	1384	4.9	15	50	115.3
J. Canzeri	7	31	125	11	114	3.7	0	15	16.3
D. Johnson	4	18	81	2	79	4.4	0	12	19.8

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Morris 110, C. Kirksey 110, J. Bernstine 89
Tackles for loss: M. Daniels 13.5, B. Binns 12, T. Nardo 6.5
Sacks: M. Daniels 9, B. Binns 5, D. Alvis 1.5
Interceptions: T. Miller 3, M. Hyde 3, four tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

There will be four Ferentzes on the Iowa practice fields this fall.

Head coach **Kirk Ferentz**, going into his 14th season at Iowa, will be flanked by his three sons. **Brian Ferentz** will be in his first season as Iowa's offensive line coach. **James Ferentz** steps into his third year as Iowa's starting center. **Steven Ferentz** will join the team as a freshman walk-on.

It's a unique and, probably, a one-of-a-kind situation.

"On a personal level, it's been interesting and not something I ever envisioned happening," Kirk Ferentz said. "It worked out beautifully. More importantly, (Brian) is doing a competent job and that's why we brought him in. He's off to a great start."

Of course, the Ferentzes have grown up in the game and are acutely aware of chain of command. James knows Brian is his coach. Steven will start his career as a tight end.

"He's always been a great teacher and I've always looked up to him for advice," James said of Brian. "He played center, so, selfishly, I'm looking forward to that insight."

• Offensive coordinator **Greg Davis** came to Iowa after 13 seasons at Texas. He likes Iowa's physical style, but he wishes the Hawkeyes had some of Texas' speed, specifically at wide receiver.

Iowa has targeted freshman wide receivers **Tevaun Smith** and **Greg Mabin** as two players who could help the Hawkeyes in that department this season.

• Iowa kicked off a major facilities upgrade this offseason.

Gone is "The Bubble," an inflatable dome that served as Iowa's indoor football facility for 27 years. It's been replaced by a $19.6 million permanent structure. A $36.6 million football operations facility that will house everything is scheduled to break ground in spring 2013.

• Linebacker Shane DiBona's career with the Hawkeyes is over. After missing 2011 with a ruptured Achilles', DiBona tried to make a comeback this spring, but he aggravated the injury and decided to end his career. DiBona started two games in the 2010 season.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"Iowa doesn't have the depth at running back they've had in some years. But they have a good offensive line. They'll have a good tailback. They lose Marvin McNutt and some firepower on the flank, but they're still good enough that if James Vandenberg has his best year, they'll move the football.

"And (new coordinator) Greg Davis is the perfect fit for what Kirk Ferentz wants to do. Ferentz is going to continue to use the running plays that have always been the core of Iowa's offense. Greg Davis knows that part of the offense, and he will bring some new concepts in the passing game that will help Vandenberg.

"The tight end, C.J. Fiedorowicz, has developed. He was a highly recruited guy and now he's maturing and he really has a chance to be an impact player, no question."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Micah Hyde
Photo by Joe Robbins

in 2012, but this is a lot of newness ... and we haven't even gotten to the two deeps.

It might be melodramatic to say Iowa's bowl-ability for 2012 rests on the development of the defensive line because so much goes into shaping a season. But a lot of what Iowa turns out to be will indeed hinge on the defensive front.

Going into spring practice, three redshirt freshmen held starting spots. Two were replaced during the course of spring. Junior end Dominic Alvis and sophomore tackle Carl Davis missed spring with knee injuries. Alvis should be a starter. Davis should contribute.

Redshirt freshman Darian Cooper has a tackle spot locked down. He's a boom-or-bust player who plays strong and low, but sometimes loses technique. Senior Steve Bigach is poised to be the other tackle. He's a journeyman starter, leading the Hawkeyes' defensive line with six career starts — all of which came last season as he played end and tackle.

Senior Joe Gaglione, who saw his first significant action last season, will be the other end. He has the requisite fifth-year senior body and punch to compete.

Parker and Wilson have said Iowa will play more press coverage. The idea there is to release a safety to the line of scrimmage to help in run support. Press coverage is also possible because Iowa has terrific corners in senior Micah Hyde and junior B.J. Lowery.

Hyde will be a three-year starter. Lowery broke up a goal-line pass to seal the Michigan victory last fall.

Iowa's linebackers should be a year better. Junior James Morris will be in his second year as a starter at middle linebacker. Junior Christian Kirksey is a potential star at outside linebacker. Junior Anthony Hitchens was named one of Iowa's most explosive players by Parker. What they need is health.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Iowa's special teams have been subpar for the last two seasons. The coverage and return teams have been spotty. Placekicking started hot in 2011 but severely tailed off. After five years of having a steady punter, Iowa is searching for a new one.

Hyde averaged 8.2 yards as punt

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB James Vandenberg

Cerebral playmaker finished third in passing in the Big Ten last season with 3,022 yards. ... Put up an impressive TD/interception ratio of 25/7 in his first season as a starter. ... Threw for 399 yards and three TDs in a 31-27 victory over Pittsburgh, capping the largest comeback in Iowa history. ... Physiology major earned academic All-Big Ten and All-District honors. ... His yards per attempt (7.5) was just average, ranking fifth in the Big Ten.

EMERGING STAR

TE C.J. Fiedorowicz

After catching just two passes in Iowa's first seven games, the 6-7, 265-pounder caught 14 with three TDs in the final six games. ... Caught two passes for 12 yards and was targeted two other times in the spring game. ... Understands the "getting big in the paint" technique, preached in Iowa's new passing game. ... Received three basketball scholarship offers coming out of Johnsburg (Ill.) High School, including ones from Wisconsin and Indiana.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Greg Garmon

Garmon (6-1, 200) gives the Hawkeyes a shifty running back with excellent acceleration, the one thing the position lacked last season. ... Picked the Hawkeyes over Miami (Fla.) and Arkansas. ... Can really cut, gather and burst, a physical skill that Iowa could put to use on kick returns this season. ... Beat non-Hodgkin Lymphoma of the bone, and lived through his house burning down in sixth grade. ... Rushed for 2,859 yards for Erie (Pa.) McDowell High, leading the school to a 23-9 record in three seasons.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	23.2	86
Rushing	114.2	99
Passing	222.1	55
Total	336.3	89
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	15.4	8
Rushing	123.6	34
Passing	152.9	4
Total	276.5	10
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.15	51

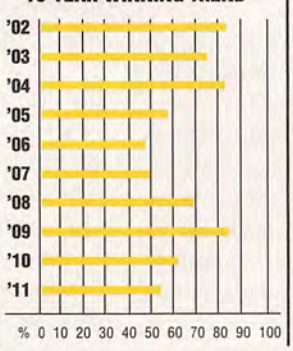
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.9	50
Rushing	148.4	70
Passing	234.5	49
Total	382.9	57
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.0	7
Rushing	101.5	6
Passing	230.5	84
Total	332.1	25
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 13	+ 1.00	7

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	27.5	58
Rushing	137.7	79
Passing	234.8	59
Total	372.5	76
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.9	46
Rushing	156.0	62
Pass	222.9	58
Total	378.9	60
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

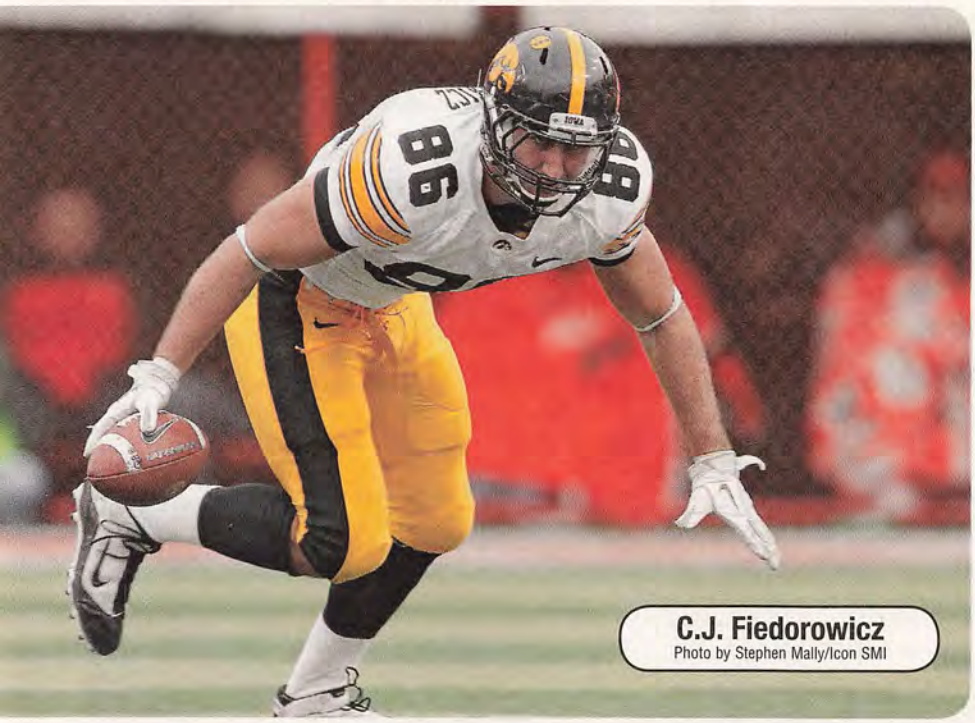


RESULTS

7-6, 4-4

W	TENNESSEE TECH	34-7
L	at Iowa State (3OT)	41-44
W	PITTSBURGH	31-27
W	ULM	45-17
L	at Penn State	3-13
W	NORTHWESTERN	41-31
W	INDIANA	45-24
L	at Minnesota	21-22
W	MICHIGAN	24-16
L	MICHIGAN STATE	21-37
W	at Purdue	31-21
L	at Nebraska	7-20
	Insight Bowl	
L	vs. Oklahoma	14-31

PLAYER PROFILE



C.J. Fiedorowicz
Photo by Stephen Mally/Icon SMI

Overnight, Tight End Becomes Pass Weapon

If anyone walks away grinning from all the changes to Iowa's offense since last December, it's got to be junior tight end C.J. Fiedorowicz.

He went to bed after the Insight Bowl and woke up with 1) former NFL assistant Brian Ferentz in town and 2) first-year offensive coordinator Greg Davis, who places a high value on creatively using the tight end position.

Brian Ferentz is Iowa's offensive line coach, but he came to Iowa fresh off his gig as New England Patriots tight ends coach. Last season, Rob Gronkowski caught 17 touchdown passes for the Patriots. Ferentz has helped some with Iowa's tight ends since his arrival.

Suddenly, coaches and players are mentioning the 6-7, 265-pound Fiedorowicz as a potential centerpiece in the passing game.

"I still need a lot of work," he said. "I need to work on blocking. I'm always looking to improve."

That improvement started to show up in the second half of last season. Over Iowa's last six games, Fiedorowicz had 14 of his 16 receptions and all three of his touchdowns, finishing with 167 yards.

He's proven himself enough in the offseason to be on the field in Iowa's five-wideout set. When Iowa emptied the backfield this spring, Fiedorowicz was split out. Fiedorowicz didn't see time in that formation until late in the season.

"During his true freshman year, this was really new to him," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said. "We were asking him to do a lot of things he hadn't done in high school. Last year, he made progress, but there was still an inconsistency there.

"This spring, he's clearly at a different level, which is good. That's what you hope to see in players. I think he's really ready to play football for us. He's got a lot of good gifts and skills."

The new wrinkles in the passing game mean Fiedorowicz can run some deeper corner and post routes, but he knows the offense will try to make a living off shorter routes.

"Deep balls are great, but the short ones count, too," Fiedorowicz said.

After two seasons of building, Fiedorowicz understands the concept of patience. He didn't catch a pass as a freshman and heard a lot about what he needed to do on the blocking side as a tight end.

"It's going to be a fun offense, absolutely," Fiedorowicz said. "It's learning a whole new offense; it takes time."

returner last season and probably keeps the job. The kick return job is up in the air, although wide receiver Keenan Davis has had a hand in the job. Ferentz said he'd like to see more "octane" on kick returns.

Senior John Wienke has the edge over sophomore Jonny Mullings at punter. Wienke came to Iowa as a quarterback and played there as late as last December. Don't count out true freshman Connor Kornbrath.

Junior Mike Meyer made 12 of his first 14 field-goal attempts last season before hitting just two of his last six.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Iowa doesn't have Wisconsin or Ohio State this season and that's a good thing, especially with the state of the youth on defense.

The Hawkeyes have some toss-ups in the non-conference. Iowa opens the season with Northern Illinois at Soldier Field in Chicago. NIU won the Mid-American Conference title game and its bowl last season.

The degree of difficulty rises after that. Iowa State, also a bowl team in 2011, beat the Hawkeyes in three overtimes at Ames last season.

Iowa hasn't had a winning November since 2008. The Hawkeyes start the final month of the season at Indiana and host Purdue before traveling to Michigan and closing at home against Nebraska.

— Marc Morehouse

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	vs. Northern Illinois (Chicago)	11-3
Sept. 8	IOWA STATE	6-7
Sept. 15	NORTHERN IOWA	10-3
Sept. 22	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	3-9
Sept. 29	MINNESOTA	3-9
Oct. 13	at Michigan State	11-3
Oct. 20	PENN STATE	9-4
Oct. 27	at Northwestern	6-7
Nov. 3	at Indiana	1-11
Nov. 10	PURDUE	7-6
Nov. 17	at Michigan	11-2
Nov. 23	NEBRASKA	9-4

BOWLING GREEN | FALCONS

MAC rank: 8 | Record: 5-7 | MAC record: 3-5 (T-4th, East) | Stadium: Perry Stadium (24,000)

By Bob Narang

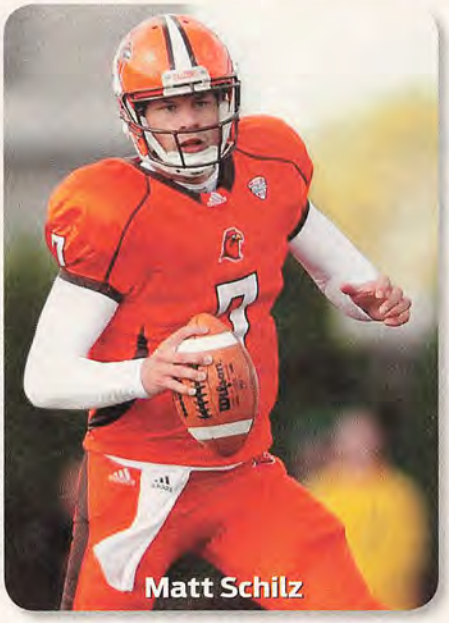


Photo Courtesy of Andrew Weber-US PRESSWIRE

"We weren't good enough on defense last year. Some (opponents) might be glad that we got so many starters back." — Coach Dave Clawson

FALCONS at a GLANCE

COACH: Dave Clawson — At Bowling Green: 14-23, 3 years; **OVERALL:** 72-72, 12 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Warren Ruggiero
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Elko

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1992
LAST BOWL: 2007, GMAC
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 5 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Matt Schilz, RB Anthon Samuel, TE Alex Bayer, WR Je'Ron Stokes, LT Fahn Cooper, DT Chris Jones, LB Dwayne Woods, P Brian Schmiedebusch

PRIMARY STRENTHS: Schilz has the potential to become an elite quarterback in the conference. Samuel is coming off a big freshman year, but has plenty of competition for carries. The offensive line is a strength, and several incoming skill players could bolster the offense.
PRIMARY PROBLEMS: Creating and limiting turnovers is an area in which the Falcons have to improve. The Falcons can't blame inexperience or youth for their misgivings on defense. Bowling Green likes to throw the ball, but the wide receivers group was decimated by offseason losses. The kicking game is a big question mark.

OFFENSE

Junior quarterback Matt Schilz is bigger and stronger and has a good grasp of the offense entering his junior season.

The 6-2, 211-pound Schilz, who threw for 3,024 yards and 28 touchdowns in 2011, won't have to deal with the myriad problems along the offensive line that hampered the Falcons' attack in the past two years. Schilz worked on limiting his mistakes and not throwing interceptions in the spring.

The line, led by left guard Dominic Flewellyn and right guard Jordan Roussos, returns five players who started at least six games last year, and can go eight or nine deep.

The Falcons are loaded at running back with Anthon Samuel, the 2011 Mid-American Conference Freshman of the Year, and Jordan Hopgood. An X-factor is tailback Andre Givens. The former Pittsburgh signee is enrolled in school, attempting to gain eligibility for the fall semester.

The Falcons, a pass-happy team that attempted 429 passes in 2011, will have an entirely new cast of wide receivers. Michigan-transfer Je'Ron Stokes and junior college recruit Michael Allen should get plenty of balls thrown their way.

DEFENSE

The Falcons gave up 27 or more points in six of their eight league games last season. It might be good news or bad news that Bowling Green brings back so many starters.

The Falcons should improve based on the simple fact that several young players received another year of experience in the 4-2-5 defensive system. Senior defensive tackle Chris Jones is one of the best defensive players in the conference. The depth at defensive end and the tackle positions will allow the Falcons to rotate players and keep them fresh late in game.

Middle linebacker Dwayne Woods had 111 tackles in 2011, but the Falcons lack quality reserves at linebacker. The secondary is young with junior Jerry "BooBoo" Gates the lone expected upperclassmen starter.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Falcons return all of their starters for the first time in four years, but expect open competition at the kicking and punt returner positions. Punter Brian Schmiedebusch averaged a robust 45.3 yards per punt last year — the fifth-best in the country. Schmiedebusch boomed 19 punts over 50 yards and had 18 downed inside the opponent's 20-yard line.

OVERVIEW

Dave Clawson finally gets to show his coaching acumen. In his first three years, the Falcons were hurt by insufficient numbers at key positions, injuries along the offensive line and high turnover rate on the roster.

The Falcons don't have those issues coming into the 2012 season. The offense is brimming with talent, but will miss wide receiver Kamar Jorden. Schilz has to lower his interception total, while the young defense holds the key to how big of a leap in the standings the Falcons can make. The Falcons must take advantage of a schedule that's one of the easiest in the conference.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Je'Ron Stokes: The Michigan transfer didn't get many balls thrown his way in two years in Ann Arbor. Stokes, a former four-star Rivals.com recruit, caught three passes for 27 yards at Michigan.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	7	**Matt Schilz***	6-2	211	Jr.
RB	6	Anthon Samuel	5-11	183	So.
FB	89	Tyler Beck	6-2	247	Jr.
WR	83	Shaun Joplin	6-2	197	Jr.
WR	16	Je'Ron Stokes	6-0	196	Jr.
TE	82	**Alex Bayer***	6-4	256	Jr.
LT	79	Fahn Cooper	6-4	294	Fr.
LG	52	**Dominic Flewellyn***	6-3	291	Jr.
C	71	**Chip Robinson***	6-5	310	Sr.
RG	73	**Jordon Roussos***	6-4	296	Sr.
RT	75	Kyle Bryant	6-5	306	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	46	Charlie Walker	6-2	228	So.
DT	91	**Chris Jones***	6-1	295	Sr.
NG	93	Ted Ouellet	6-3	273	Jr.
DE	92	Zach Colvin	6-2	271	So.
LB	33	**Paul Swan***	6-0	226	Jr.
LB	5	**Dwayne Woods***	5-11	227	Sr.
LB	34	Brian Sutton	5-11	186	So.
CB	8	**Cameron Truss***	5-10	189	So.
CB	12	**DeVon McKoy***	5-10	189	So.
SS	24	**BooBoo Gates***	5-10	209	Jr.
FS	15	**Ryland Ward***	5-9	204	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	49	**Stephen Stein***	5-11	186	Sr.
P	95	**Brian Schmiedebusch***	6-4	214	Jr.

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Florida
Sept. 8	IDAHO
Sept. 15	at Toledo
Sept. 22	at Virginia Tech
Sept. 29	RHODE ISLAND
Oct. 6	at Akron
Oct. 13	MIAMI (OH)
Oct. 20	at Massachusetts
Oct. 27	EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 7	at Ohio
Nov. 17	KENT STATE
Nov. 23	vs. Buffalo (Columbus, OH)

2011 RESULTS

W	at Idaho	32-15
W	MORGAN STATE	58-13
L	WYOMING	27-28
W	at Miami (OH)	37-23
L	at West Virginia	10-55
L	at Western Michigan	21-45
L	TOLEDO	21-28
W	TEMPLE	13-10
L	at Kent State	15-27
L	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	14-45
L	OHIO	28-29
W	at Buffalo	42-28

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.5	63
Rushing	122.9	91
Passing	261.6	31
Total	384.5	62

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.8	77
Rushing	203.4	104
Pass	202.6	34
Total	406.0	79

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
-13	-1.08	116

MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

For more coverage of the Wolverines, visit michigan.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Al Borges | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Greg Mattison** | **STADIUM: Michigan Stadium: 107,501**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
11-2, 6-2 Big Ten (2nd, Legends)

COACH:
Brady Hoke — At Michigan: 11-2, 1 year; overall: 58-52, 9 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 6 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Denard Robinson, RB Fitz Toussaint, WR Roy Roundtree, C Ricky Barnum, LT Taylor Lewan, DE Craig Roh, DT Will Campbell, S Jordan Kovacs

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
An improved Robinson should bring even more stability to an offense that averaged 33.3 points per game. Having Toussaint as the established tailback should further spark the ground attack. An experienced secondary should have corrected mistakes that led to opponents' big plays late last year.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Only time will tell if Robinson has eliminated his propensity for turnovers. With Mike Martin, Ryan Van Bergen and Will Heininger gone on the defensive line, getting production from players in new positions and toughness up the middle could be a question mark.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Junior Hemingway, C David Molk, DE Ryan Van Bergen, NT Mike Martin, DT Will Heininger

OVERVIEW:
The potential for Michigan to build on last year's 11-2 campaign and win the Big Ten is certainly there. But with a much tougher schedule — starting with defending national champion Alabama and road games against Notre Dame and Ohio State — it's not out of the realm of possibility the Wolverines could have a hard time matching those 11 wins.

Expectations Running High in Ann Arbor

Year One of the Brady Hoke regime was — as defined within Schembechler Hall — an unmitigated failure.

Forget, Hoke's players insist, about the 11-2 record or the Sugar Bowl victory over Virginia Tech, marking Michigan's first BCS bowl win since 2000. Never mind the one-year turnaround that came in stark contrast to the three previous seasons when the Wolverines won a total of 15 games under Rich Rodriguez.

For the Wolverines, this is what really mattered:

Michigan did not reach the inaugural Big Ten Championship Game, a reality that represented the Wolverines' internal shortcomings and makes this season's goal clearly defined.

"Last year, we failed," safety Jordan Kovacs said.

"It wasn't a successful season — our mission every year is to win a Big Ten championship and we didn't do that. At the end of the day, we didn't get what we wanted, so that makes us hungrier for next year."

For all of last year's success — and there was plenty, including snapping a seven-game losing streak to archrival Ohio State — Michigan heads into the new season determined to take care of unfinished business.

It's the reason quarterback Denard Robinson returned for his senior year. It's why Hoke's players spent the offseason unfazed by their Sugar Bowl success and why they focus on what they didn't accomplish rather than on what they did.

It's the message that Hoke — the Big Ten's reigning Coach of the Year — stresses how far his team is away from being where it needs to be rather than relishing the strides the program made in his first year in Ann Arbor.

With a host of offensive skill players — namely Robinson and second-leading rusher Fitz Toussaint returning — Michigan's offseason improvement plan dwells up front. There are big names to replace and a defensive toughness that needs to be re-established.

But with a season-opening test against defending national champion Alabama awaiting the Wolverines in Arlington, the incentive to improve is certainly there.

Especially with a bar of expectation set so high and with the goal of winning a Big Ten title not yet attained.

"I think the kids are working — I think they're coming here with energy and all those things," Hoke said. "But I think the expectation level, how physical we want to be as a football team, I would say we're not where we need to be."

OFFENSE

Al Borges operates best within his comfort zone, but he is willing to make adjustments when needed.

When Borges got his first glimpse of quarterback Denard Robinson last year, he expanded his boundaries to allow Robinson to make the most of his skill set.

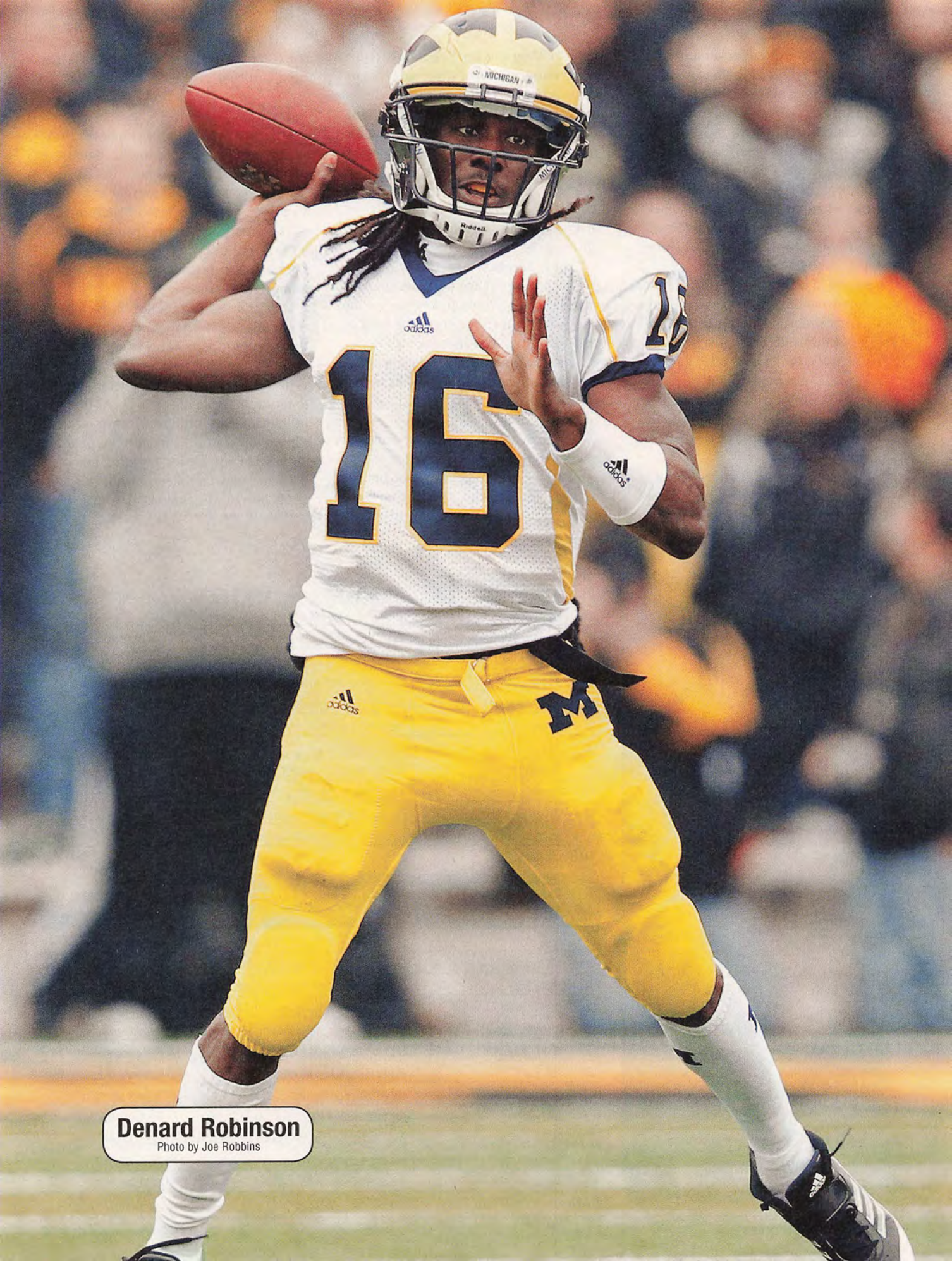
That came with its share of growing pains.

Robinson threw 15 interceptions and completed only 55 percent of his passes. He struggled at times to effectively run a hybrid offense that included elements of both the spread and pro-style sets.

But armed with a better understanding of what the other expects, Borges and Robinson expect smoother sailing.

"It's night and day," Robinson said.

Fitz Toussaint enters the year as the bona fide feature back — a title he didn't earn until a month into last season. After rushing for 1,041 yards and nine touchdowns last season, Toussaint worked to become more of a complete back.



Denard Robinson
Photo by Joe Robbins

He improved as a blocker and as a pass-catcher out of the backfield — a multi-faceted skill set Borges requires from his backs. The Wolverines should also benefit from the improvement of sophomore Thomas Rawls, whom Borges describes as a "battering ram."

Rawls, at 219 pounds, has the ability to run with power, but what excites Borges is the added dimension Rawls has discovered when he added some stop-and-go to his skill set.

Backfield blocking will be key to assist an offensive line dealing with change.

Center Ricky Barnum must fill the shoes of Rimington Trophy winner David Molk, while left tackle Taylor Lewan assumes more of a leadership role. Walk-on Joey Burzynski made an impressive showing in the spring and could fit a starting line that shoulders a lot of responsibility.

Replacing leading receiver Junior Hemingway may be the biggest challenge. Filling the gap begins with senior Roy Roundtree. Roundtree saw a significant drop-off in production (19 catches, 355 yards, two touchdowns) last year, but moving into Hemingway's flanker role could mean a statistical boost.

Juniors Jeremy Gallon and Jeremy Jackson, along with sophomore Jerald Robinson, all are part of the receiving arsenal, helping cover Hemingway's absence.

Expect Borges to also throw in a bit of the deuce package he experimented with last year, which put Robinson and back-up Devin Gardner on the field at the same time. Gardner took about 85 snaps at wide receiver during spring drills, which could be an added wrinkle for Borges to make the most of what he's got.

"We're evolving constantly and we're always trying to figure out how to get our best 11 on the field to do what they do best," Borges said. "That may not consistently be the same 11 guys all the time, but that's we're looking for."

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Greg Mattison spent the spring reshaping his defensive line following the graduation of nose tackle Mike Martin, defensive end Ryan Van Bergen and tackle Will Heininger.

The process is essentially a face-lift to a front four that played a critical role in Michigan's impressive defensive turnaround last season.

Defensive end Craig Roh moved from the weak side to the strong side, a move that plays more to Roh's strengths and covered a gap left by Van Bergen.

Jibreel Black moved from defensive end to tackle, allowing Black to better utilize his quickness. With Black's move inside, sophomores Frank Clark and Brennen Beyer will compete for a starting job at defensive end, completing what will certainly be a new-look unit up front.

Taylor Lewan
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Denard Robinson*	Sr.	Better decisions, fundamentals should reduce INTs.	Devin Gardner, Jr.
RB	Fitz Toussaint*	Jr.	Confidence, better vision could lead to big numbers.	Vincent Smith, Sr.
FB	Stephen Hopkins	Jr.	Makes the transition after playing TB in 2011.	Joe Kerridge, Fr.
WR	Roy Roundtree*	Sr.	Expect numbers to jump after moving to flanker.	Jerald Robinson, So.
WR	Jeremy Gallon	Jr.	Gives QB Robinson another legitimate downfield threat.	Jeremy Jackson, Jr.
TE	Brandon Moore	Sr.	Finally gets his chance after being a career understudy.	Ricardo Miller, Jr.
LT	Taylor Lewan*	Jr.	Assumes the leadership role for offensive line.	Kristian Mateus, So.
LG	Joey Burzynski	So.	Walk-on used solid spring to position himself as starter.	Elliott Mealer, Sr.
C	Ricky Barnum	Sr.	Has big shoes to fill replacing Rimington winner Molk.	Jack Miller, Fr.
RG	Patrick Omameh*	Sr.	Veteran presence provides stability to offensive line.	Chris Bryant, Fr.
RT	Michael Schofield*	Jr.	Ten starts last season provided confidence.	Kyle Kalis, Fr.
K	Brendan Gibbons*	Jr.	Connected on 13 of 17 FG attempts last year.	Matt Wile, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Craig Roh*	Sr.	Move to strongside should pay dividends.	Nathan Brink, Jr.
NT	Will Campbell	Sr.	Former five-star recruit ready for breakout season.	Richard Ash, So.
DT	Jibreel Black	Jr.	Speedy tackle better suited inside after move from DE.	Quinton Washington, Jr.
DE	Brennen Beyer	So.	Has the ability to make an impact as a first-time starter.	Frank Clark, So.
LB	Desmond Morgan*	So.	Made 63 tackles in impressive freshman season.	Brandin Hawthorne, Sr.
LB	Kenny Demens*	Sr.	Led team with 94 tackles last season.	Joe Bolden, Fr.
LB	Jake Ryan*	So.	Energy helps set tone for entire defense.	Cam Gordon, Jr.
CB	Blake Countess	So.	Hopes to build off freshman success.	Terrence Talbott, Jr.
CB	J.T. Floyd*	Sr.	Has to be more consistent in downfield coverage.	Courtney Avery, Jr.
S	Jordan Kovacs*	Sr.	Secondary anchor ready to take leadership role.	Marvin Robinson, Jr.
S	Thomas Gordon*	Jr.	Has to feel comfortable taking more chances.	Jarrod Wilson. Fr.
P	Will Hagerup*	Jr.	Will likely have to solidify starting job in fall camp.	Matt Wile, So.

*Returning Starter

WOLVERINES RECRUITING 2012 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Ondre Pipkins
Michigan lost three-year starter Mike Martin at the nose tackle position, and has little depth behind him ready to step into that role. The 6-3, 325-pound Pipkins was dominant against the nation's top talent at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl and has the goods to start from Day 1.

Kyle Kalis
Offensive linemen contributing as freshman is rare, but the 6-5, 305-pound Kalis is a rare prospect. Physically he already looks the part of a college player and his technique is well ahead of his years. Combine that with Michigan's need for immediate help, and Kalis could see the field this fall.

Joe Bolden
Michigan signed four linebackers in the 2012 class, and two of them enrolled mid-year, including the 6-3, 230-pound Bolden. With outstanding size and athleticism, Bolden is also the highest ranked linebacker of Michigan's four newcomers at the position. Being on campus in the spring has given Bolden a chance to earn early playing time.

THE SLEEPER

Jeremy Clark
Michigan initially offered the 6-4, 205-pound Clark a gray-shirt opportunity when he first committed to the Wolverines the summer before his senior year, but his play as a senior convinced Brady Hoke and his staff they needed him on campus immediately and Clark was brought in as part of the 2012 class.

Committments	25
Average Stars	3.56
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	10
★★★☆☆	13
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	89
National Rank: 7	Big Ten: 2

2013 NEEDS: Michigan's numbers on the offensive line continue to remain low despite signing four prospects at the position in the 2012 class. The Wolverines also fell short of meeting their needs at tight end, where they are still looking for the player who can be an asset both as a blocker and a receiver. Most programs like to have a quarterback in each class, but that position was not addressed in 2012. Michigan needs to land a big-time, pro-style passer in the 2013 class.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Blake Bars	OL	6-5	275	✪✪✪✪	Nashville, TN	Montgomery Bell Academy
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Tennessee by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 offensive tackle.						
Joe Bolden	LB	6-3	230	✪✪✪✪	Cincinnati, OH	Colerain
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 7 outside linebacker...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game.						
Ben Braden	OL	6-6	285	✪✪✪	Rockford, MI	Rockford
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 38 offensive tackle.						
Jehu Chesson	WR	6-3	182	✪✪✪	St. Louis, MO	Ladue Horton Watkins
Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Missouri by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 91 wide receiver.						
Jeremy Clark	DB	6-4	205	✪✪✪	Madisonville, KY	Madisonville North Hopkins
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Kentucky by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 safety.						
Amara Darboh	WR	6-2	190	✪✪✪✪	West Des Moines, IA	Dowling
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Iowa...Rated as the nation's No. 30 wide receiver.						
Devin Funchess	TE	6-5	205	✪✪✪	Farmington Hills, MI	Harrison
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 14 tight end.						
Allen Gant	DB	6-2	210	✪✪✪	Sylvania, OH	Sylvania Southview
Rated as the No. 57 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 45 safety.						
Matthew Godin	DT	6-6	270	✪✪✪	Novi, MI	Detroit Catholic Central
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 defensive tackle.						
Willie Henry	DT	6-2	270	✪✪✪	Cleveland, OH	Glenville Academic Campus
Rated as the No. 59 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Chose Michigan over Pittsburgh, Illinois and others.						
Sione Houma	RB	6-0	211	✪✪✪	Salt Lake City, UT	Highland
Rated as the nation's No. 5 fullback by Rivals.com...Rushed for 1,211 yards and nine touchdowns as a senior.						
Royce Jenkins-Stone	LB	6-2	215	✪✪✪✪	Detroit, MI	Cass Tech
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 9 inside linebacker...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Drake Johnson	RB	6-1	200	✪✪✪	Ann Arbor, MI	Pioneer
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rushed for 2,800 yards and 37 touchdowns as a senior.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Kyle Kalis	OL	6-5	305	✪✪✪✪✪	Lakewood, OH	St. Edward
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 4 offensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Erik Magnuson	OL	6-6	275	✪✪✪✪	Carlsbad, CA	La Costa Canyon
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 12 prospect in California...Rated as the nation's No. 10 offensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Dennis Norfleet	RB	5-7	170	✪✪✪✪	Detroit, MI	Martin Luther King
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 5 all-purpose back.						
Mario Ojemudia	DE	6-3	215	✪✪✪	Farmington Hills, MI	Harrison
Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 30 weakside defensive end.						
Ondre Pipkins	DT	6-3	330	✪✪✪✪✪	Kansas City, MO	Park Hill
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Missouri...Rated as the nation's No. 3 defensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Terry Richardson	DB	5-9	160	✪✪✪✪	Detroit, MI	Cass Tech
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 18 cornerback...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game.						
Kaleb Ringer	LB	6-0	219	✪✪✪	Clayton, OH	Northmont
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 17 inside linebacker.						
James Ross	LB	6-0	209	✪✪✪✪	Orchard Lake, MI	St. Mary's
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 14 outside linebacker...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Tom Strobel	DE	6-6	245	✪✪✪✪	Mentor, OH	Mentor
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 weakside defensive end.						
A.J. Williams	TE	6-6	260	✪✪✪	Cincinnati, OH	Sycamore
Rated as the No. 26 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 22 tight end.						
Jarrod Wilson	DB	6-2	190	✪✪✪✪	Akron, OH	Buchtel
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 12 safety.						
Christopher Wormley	DE	6-6	270	✪✪✪	Toledo, OH	Whitmer
Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 21 strongside defensive end.						

WOLVERINES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
40	Nate Allspach	TE	6-6	224	So.	Grand Rapids
54	Richard Ash	DT	6-3	301	So.	Pahokee, FL
5	Courtney Avery	CB	5-11	173	Jr.	Mansfield, OH
38	Al Backey	CB	5-10	181	Jr.	Ypsilanti
52	Ricky Barnum	OL	6-3	292	Sr.	Lakeland, FL
8	Russell Bellomy	QB	6-3	189	Fr.	Arlington, TX
97	Brennen Beyer	DE	6-3	225	So.	Canton
55	Jibreel Black	DT	6-2	260	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
35	Joe Bolden	LB	6-3	230	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
67	Nathan Brink	DT	6-5	263	Jr.	Holland
46	Seth Broekhuizen	PK	6-1	200	Jr.	Holland
58	Chris Bryant	OL	6-4	341	Fr.	Chicago, IL
56	Joey Burzynski	OL	6-1	284	So.	Carlsbad, CA
73	William Campbell	DT	6-5	322	Sr.	Detroit
20	Tamani Carter	DB	5-11	175	Fr.	Pickerington, OH
57	Frank Clark	DE	6-2	228	So.	Cleveland, OH
18	Blake Countess	DB	5-10	176	So.	Owings Mills, MD
25	Kenny Demens	LB	6-1	248	Sr.	Oak Park
26	Drew Dileo	WR	5-10	172	Jr.	Greenwell Springs, LA
93	Chris Eddins	TE	6-5	265	So.	Detroit
42	Dylan Esterline	TE	6-5	237	So.	Blissfield
8	J.T. Floyd	CB	6-0	185	Sr.	Greenville, SC
14	Josh Furman	S	6-2	208	So.	Annapolis, MD
10	Jeremy Gallon	WR	5-8	185	Jr.	Apopka, FL
7	Devin Gardner	QB	6-4	205	Jr.	Detroit
34	Brendan Gibbons	PK	6-1	241	Jr.	West Palm Beach, FL
54	Jareth Glanda	LS	6-3	255	Jr.	Rochester Hills
61	Graham Glasgow	OL	6-6	314	Fr.	Aurora, IL
4	Cameron Gordon	LB	6-3	222	Jr.	Detroit
30	Thomas Gordon	S	5-11	208	Jr.	Detroit
94	Curt Graman	LS	6-5	200	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
69	Erik Gunderson	OL	6-8	312	Jr.	Milan
99	Paul Gyarmati	FB	6-1	216	Sr.	Bloomfield Hills
43	Will Hagerup	P	6-4	225	Jr.	Milwaukee, WI
7	Brandin Hawthorne	LB	6-0	214	Sr.	Pahokee, FL
5	Justice Hayes	RB	5-10	176	Fr.	Grand Blanc
92	Keith Heitzman	DE	6-3	251	Fr.	Hilliard, OH
24	Delonte Hollowell	DB	5-9	164	So.	Detroit
33	Stephen Hopkins	RB	6-0	228	Jr.	Double Oak, TX
17	Jeremy Jackson	WR	6-3	198	Jr.	Ann Arbor
27	Mike Jones	LB	6-2	224	Jr.	Orlando, FL
27	Jonathan Keizer	WR	6-5	205	Fr.	Portage, MI
14	Jack Kennedy	QB	5-11	185	Sr.	Walled Lake
36	Joe Kerridge	FB	6-0	231	Fr.	Traverse City
32	Jordan Kovacs	S	6-0	197	Sr.	Curtice, OH
81	Mike Kwiatkowski	TE	6-5	257	Sr.	Macomb
77	Taylor Lewan	OL	6-8	302	Jr.	Scottsdale, AZ
70	Kristian Mateus	OL	6-7	285	So.	Ada
57	Elliott Mealer	OL	6-5	310	Sr.	Wauseon, OH
60	Jack Miller	OL	6-4	263	Fr.	Perrysburg, OH
80	Ricardo Miller	TE	6-4	234	Jr.	Orlando, FL
89	Brandon Moore	TE	6-5	255	Sr.	Trotwood, OH
44	Desmond Morgan	LB	6-1	220	So.	Holland
65	Patrick Omameh	OL	6-4	299	Sr.	Columbus, OH
94	Jordan Paskorz	TE	6-3	246	So.	Gibsonia, PA
40	Antonio Poole	LB	6-2	212	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
38	Thomas Rawls	RB	5-10	219	So.	Flint
85	Joe Reynolds	WR	6-1	191	Jr.	Rochester
49	Kaleb Ringer	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Clayton, OH
16	Denard Robinson	QB	6-0	195	Sr.	Deerfield Beach, FL
83	Jerald Robinson	WR	6-1	206	So.	Canton, OH
3	Marvin Robinson	S	6-2	200	Jr.	Winter Haven, FL
95	Chris Rock	DE	6-5	267	Fr.	Columbus, OH
88	Craig Roh	DE	6-5	269	Sr.	Scottsdale, AZ
12	Roy Roundtree	WR	6-0	177	Sr.	Trotwood, OH
90	Jake Ryan	LB	6-3	230	So.	Westlake, OH
96	Baquer Sayed	WR	6-0	196	So.	Dearborn
75	Michael Schofield	OL	6-7	299	Jr.	Orland Park, IL
23	Floyd Simmons	S	6-0	194	Sr.	Detroit
2	Vincent Smith	RB	5-6	172	Sr.	Pahokee, FL
13	Alex Swieca	QB	6-1	210	Fr.	New York, NY
37	Terrence Talbott	CB	5-11	178	Jr.	Huber Heights, OH
6	Raymon Taylor	DB	5-10	169	So.	Detroit
28	Fitzgerald Toussaint	RB	5-10	195	Jr.	Youngstown, OH
76	Quinton Washington	DT	6-4	302	Jr.	St. Stephen, SC
45	Matt Wile	PK	6-2	208	So.	San Diego, CA
41	Kenny Wilkins	DT	6-3	280	So.	Washington, PA
22	Jarrod Wilson	S	6-2	190	Fr.	Akron, OH
4	Steve Wilson	QB	5-11	180	Sr.	White Lake
19	Charlie Zeller	S	5-11	194	Jr.	Centennial, CO

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Robinson	13	139.7	142	258	15	55.0	2173	20	77	167.2
D. Gardner	9	117.8	11	23	1	47.8	176	1	32	19.6

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Hemingway	13	34	699	20.6	4	77	53.8
J. Gallon	13	31	453	14.6	3	64	34.8
K. Koger	13	23	244	10.6	4	40	18.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Robinson	13	221	1349	173	1176	5.3	16	53	90.5
F. Toussaint	12	187	1091	50	1041	5.6	9	65	86.8
V. Smith	13	50	305	7	298	6.0	2	38	22.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Demens 94, J. Kovacs 75, T. Gordon 67
Tackles for loss: R. Van Bergen 12.5, J. Ryan 11, two tied with 8
Sacks: R. Van Bergen 5.5, J. Kovacs 4, C. Roh 4
Interceptions: J.T. Floyd 2, C. Avery 2, three tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Redshirt sophomore safety **Josh Furman** was reinstated to the team following spring ball after being suspended for three criminal charges.

Furman was arrested following a February incident. A trial resulted in Furman being found not guilty of domestic violence, assault and illegal entry. Coach **Brady Hoke** announced Furman had been reinstated on April 30, saying Furman understands the responsibilities associated with being part of the program.

"It is our job to make sure he continues to grow off the field, as well as on the field," Hoke said.

Furman appeared in 12 games last season, playing mostly on special teams.

• Hoke said at the end of spring ball that he would consider allowing a player to wear the coveted No. 1 jersey, which has been worn in the past by receivers **Anthony Carter** and **Braylon Edwards**.

The likely candidate is senior **Roy Roundtree**, who has worn No. 12. But Roundtree, who has said being considered as a possible team captain would be an honor, understands he would have to earn the number change.

"For any receiver on the team, it would be a special moment," Roundtree said. "It takes hard work and dedication, and the coaches are the ones giving it out. They're not just going to give it — you have to earn it."

• After going 3-0 in night games last season, the Wolverines face three more prime-time appearances and another late afternoon kickoff this year. Michigan begins the year against defending national champion Alabama in Arlington on Sept. 1 and then will face Notre Dame under the lights in South Bend.

While Hoke's players are trying to focus on their own business, it's hard to ignore the big stage to start the season.

"You can't start any bigger than that," safety **Jordan Kovacs** said.

One Big Ten game — Oct. 27 at Nebraska — will also be a prime-time start, while Michigan's Oct. 6 conference road test at Purdue will begin at 4 p.m.

Michigan is 25-12 all-time in games starting after 5 p.m. ET. Michigan won night games last season against Notre Dame, Northwestern and Virginia Tech (in the Sugar Bowl).

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"They have one of the most dynamic players in the country in Denard Robinson. The thing is, Michigan can't be a pro-style team because that doesn't accentuate his talents. But they can't be a spread team because he won't last a season because of the contact he'll take. So, again, we have this cross-breed kind of offense that was effective last year and needs to be effective again.

"One of the best things that can happen to Michigan in 2012 is if (Fitzgerald) Toussiant or a tailback is their leading rusher. You don't want Denard Robinson to be the leading rusher because then he's carrying the ball too much. And, yet, you want to have the opposing defense defend Robinson as a runner while having a tailback-dominated run game. That's the dilemma for Michigan."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Fitzgerald Toussaint
Photo by Scott Boehm

That left only the vital role of the nose tackle, which Mattison fingered senior Will Campbell to play. Campbell, a former five-star recruit who has yet to reach his potential, suddenly realized he was running out of time.

Mattison's message to Campbell was clear.

"We need him to be a football player," Mattison said. "We need him to not just knock people around, but tackle the football. The ball is the issue — not how many lumps you can put on that guard or that center.

"Will is getting it, and Will's the key."

Campbell has to define the middle of the defense, where coach Brady Hoke said he needs to see more toughness. Hoke has singled out a corps of linebackers that has shown promise — especially with sophomores Jake Ryan and Desmond Morgan — who made significant strides last year as freshmen.

Returning leading tackler Kenny Demens provides experience at middle linebacker, but he must also dictate how strong the Wolverines are up the middle.

Amid all the change, though, is some level of comfort with the familiarity of the scheme Mattison introduced last year. Prior to Hoke's hiring, Michigan defensive players shuffled through schemes and coordinators like a deck of cards. Now armed with a better understanding of where the bar has been set, executing the plan becomes easier.

"That's good for us," said senior Jordan Kovacs, who anchors the defensive backfield. "It's nice to be comfortable with the guys and comfortable with the plays."

While there's a new level of understanding, there's also more that is expected. Despite the improvements made last year defensively, Mattison is unrelenting in his pursuit of getting his unit to be a "Michigan defense."

Regardless of how much reshaping has been done, that will require more work.

"We're still miles and miles away," Mattison said.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Placekicker Brendan Gibbons solidified himself with a game-winning 34-yard field goal that gave the Wolverines an overtime Sugar Bowl win over Virginia Tech. Gibbons continues to be more consistent after hitting on 13 of 17 field-goal attempts last year.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Denard Robinson

Robinson has the talent to be in the Heisman Trophy conversation, but he must be more consistent in the passing game. ... He was Michigan's leading rusher last season (1,176 yards, 16 touchdowns). ... Robinson has to build on the improvement he made during the spring and must make better throws downfield to take advantage of his receiving corps. ... Most importantly, he must limit his turnovers after throwing 15 interceptions last year.

EMERGING STAR

LB Desmond Morgan

The sophomore made quite an impression last year, when he made seven starts and registered 63 tackles. ... Morgan has a knack for getting to the football and for the kind of toughness defensive coordinator Greg Mattison demands. His four tackles for loss were among the team's best and he also had a sack. ... Only one year into his Michigan career, it's easy to see that Morgan has the potential to become a standout.

TOP NEWCOMER

LG Joey Burzynski

The redshirt sophomore walk-on was a virtual unknown when camp began, apparently buried on the depth chart behind senior Elliott Mealer and redshirt freshman Chris Bryant. ... But Burzynski's work ethic and consistency throughout spring practices helped him edge out Mealer for the starting left guard spot in the spring scrimmage. ... OC Al Borges said Burzynski hasn't earned the permanent starting job, but he's done his best to position himself for the fall competition.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.5	41
Rushing	186.2	25
Passing	198.3	81
Total	384.5	59
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.5	77
Rushing	171.9	91
Passing	221.4	67
Total	393.3	82
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 12	- 1.00	115

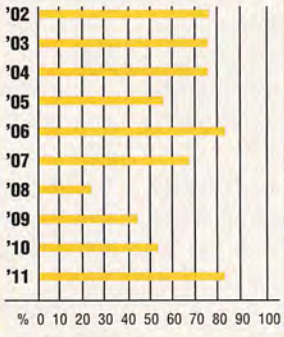
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	32.8	25
Rushing	238.5	13
Passing	250.2	36
Total	488.7	8
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	35.2	108
Rushing	188.9	95
Passing	261.9	112
Total	450.8	110
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 10	- 0.77	109

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	33.3	26
Rushing	221.9	13
Passing	182.9	93
Total	404.7	42
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.4	6
Rushing	131.7	39
Pass	190.5	16
Total	322.2	17
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.54	25

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

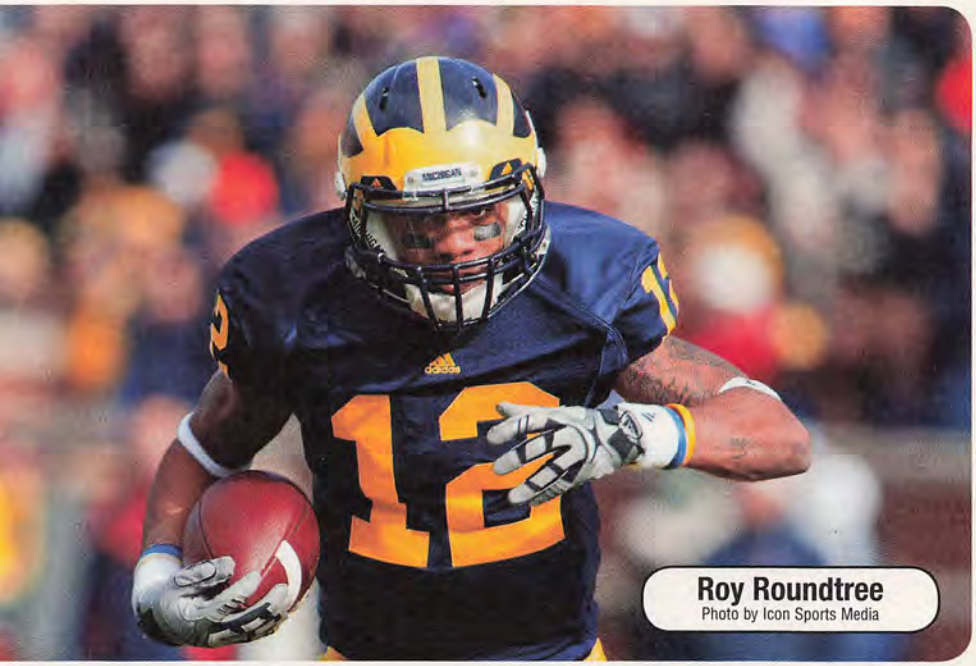


RESULTS

11-2, 6-2

W	WESTERN MICHIGAN	34-10
W	NOTRE DAME	35-31
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	31-3
W	SAN DIEGO STATE	28-7
W	MINNESOTA	58-0
W	at Northwestern	42-24
L	at Michigan State	14-28
W	PURDUE	36-14
L	at Iowa	16-24
W	at Illinois	31-14
W	NEBRASKA	45-17
W	OHIO STATE	40-34
	Sugar Bowl	
W	vs. Virginia Tech (OT)	23-20

PLAYER PROFILE



Roy Roundtree
Photo by Icon Sports Media

Patience to Pay Off For WR Roundtree

Roy Roundtree could have taken the easy way out.

He could have sulked. He could have complained about a lack of work or having to accept a lesser role.

As a sophomore in 2010, Roundtree led Michigan in receiving with 72 catches for 935 yards and seven touchdowns. By the end of last season, Roundtree had all of 19 catches for 355 yards — a statistical hit that could have riled others in his position.

Not Roundtree.

"It would be natural to second-guess a lot of things, but he didn't," offensive coordinator Al Borges said. "And because he didn't, he's improving daily."

Rather than focus on his diminished numbers, Roundtree sought other ways to fit in.

He worked to become a better downfield blocker, competing with his fellow receivers in how many defenders they laid out.

Although it wasn't the kind of statistic found in the box score, Roundtree discovered satisfaction.

"We really weren't worried about the ball because the quarterback's got the ball in his hands," Roundtree said. "He was the one that was making the right decisions."

Roundtree put effort into his route running, knowing that at any time, the ball could be coming his way.

With the exception of a last-second, game-winning touchdown catch against Notre Dame, Roundtree remained out of the spotlight, understanding one day, his time would come again.

Even though his numbers didn't stand out, his attitude did.

Borges became impressed with how Roundtree accepted sharing time with Jeremy Gallon at split end while the majority of Denard Robinson's downfield completions went to flanker Junior Hemingway.

Quietly, Roundtree went about his business.

"I was just going out there competing," Roundtree said. "Even though I probably had one catch a game, that one catch (was) a factor."

This year, things could change, shifting Roundtree again back into (more visible) action. He will assume Hemingway's spot at flanker — a move that should increase how much he sees the ball.

As a senior, he has become a mentor to younger receivers. Roundtree continues to play with a team-first attitude, finding gratification with winning, no matter the statistics next to his name.

Borges, for one, expects Roundtree's work and willingness to take what comes his way, to pay off.

"I have no doubt Roy Roundtree is going to have a heck of a year," Borges said.

Punting duties aren't nearly as clear-cut. Will Hagerup and Matt Wile — who handles kickoff duties — will enter the fall "neck and neck" for the starting job after neither separated themselves during the spring.

In the return game, Jeremy Gallon has made himself the favorite to handle punts, showing great confidence in catching the ball as well as exhibiting solid field vision. The returner on kickoffs still needs some defining; running backs Thomas Rawls, Justice Hayes, Vincent Smith and cornerback Blake Countess are all in the mix.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

If the Wolverines were looking for an instant measuring stick to start the season, they got one.

Taking on defending national champion Alabama in Arlington offers Hoke a gauge of how his team measures up against elite competition. It may be the best thing that could have happened, considering the battery of competition the Wolverines face later on.

Michigan plays rivals Ohio State and Notre Dame on the road and must also travel to Nebraska. Both of the Wolverines' losses (Michigan State and Iowa) came away from home last year when Big Ten teams struggled to win on the road.

The Wolverines do get in-state foe Michigan State at home Oct. 20 — a game that will be critical to Michigan's Big Ten title chances.

— Jeff Arnold

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	vs. Alabama (Arlington, TX)	12-1
Sept. 8	AIR FORCE	7-6
Sept. 15	MASSACHUSETTS	5-6
Sept. 22	at Notre Dame	8-5
Oct. 6	at Purdue	7-6
Oct. 13	ILLINOIS	7-6
Oct. 20	MICHIGAN STATE	11-3
Oct. 27	at Nebraska	9-4
Nov. 3	at Minnesota	3-9
Nov. 10	NORTHWESTERN	6-7
Nov. 17	IOWA	7-6
Nov. 24	at Ohio State	6-7

BUFFALO | BULLS

MAC rank: 9 Record: 3-9 MAC record: 2-6 (6th, East) Stadium: UB Stadium (29,013)

By Matt Markey

Photo by Jeanine Leech/Icon SMI

Khalil Mack

"Our offense will have the opportunity to be highly productive."
— Coach Jeff Quinn

BULLS at a GLANCE

COACH: Jeff Quinn — At Buffalo and overall: 5-19, 2 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Alex Wood
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Lou Tepper

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2008
LAST BOWL: 2008, International
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 6 offense, 7 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Alex Zordich, RB Branden Oliver, WR Alex Neutz, OL Gokhan Ozkan, LB Khalil Mack, LB Lee Skinner, DL Steven Means

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The Bulls like their offensive potential, since they return two quarterbacks with starting experience in Zordich and senior Jerry Davis, and add exciting freshman Joe Licata to the mix. Oliver is a powerhouse who had 1,395 yards and eight 100-yard games last season.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Buffalo was hit hard by graduation losses at wide receiver and doesn't have a senior at the position. Neutz comes back from a season-ending injury and needs to lead a young group that will have to fast-track its development to give the offense some balance and punch through the air.

OFFENSE

The Bulls like junior quarterback Alex Zordich's running ability, plus his combination of size and strength, while freshman Joe Licata proved in spring ball he is a gifted thrower and a viable second option.

What will make the Buffalo quarterbacks better is the track record of junior running back Branden Oliver, a workhorse who set school records with his 306 carries for nearly 1,400 yards last season.

Oliver blends speed, balance and strength in his 5-8, 204-pound frame that pounded out 235 yards against Akron last season.

The passing game will rely on junior Alex Neutz to provide a big-play threat since heavy graduation losses leave him as the likely go-to guy. Sophomore Devon Hughes looks ready to assume a lead role here, too.

Junior tight end Jake Reeder is healed after a knee injury slowed him in 2011, while the offensive line returns four starters. Seniors Graham Whinery and Gokhan Ozkan are the anchors.

DEFENSE

New defensive coordinator Lou Tepper should get pop from the group at linebacker.

The former Illinois head coach has a prime talent in junior Khalil Mack, who won first-team All-MAC honors last season as a sophomore, forcing five fumbles and finishing third in the country with 20.5 tackles for loss.

Mack is joined in the linebacker corps by sophomore Lee Skinner, who had 80 stops as a freshman in 2011, and by productive senior Scott Pettigrew.

The line expects big-play production from senior Steven Means, whose 12 career sacks are his calling card. Junior Colby Way relies on a high-motor approach that led him to 49 stops last season, tops among the Buffalo defensive linemen.

The secondary moves into 2012 poised to improve on its tackling and ability to force turnovers. Safety Isaac Baugh is the lone senior and brings a physical edge to the unit. Junior Najja Johnson and sophomore Cortney Lester are solid at the corners after a season as starters.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore Patrick Clarke is the returning starter at kicker and one of the leading candidates to fill the vacancy at punter. Clarke won the kicking job late in the 2011 season and went perfect over the final three games, hitting all 10 extra points and all six field-goal tries.

He will be the punter, at least on an interim basis, unless incoming recruit Tyler Grassman demonstrates he can take that job away.

OVERVIEW

As Jeff Quinn enters his third season at the helm, he will have to keep his team in the middle of things in the MAC East and demonstrate enough improvement to show that the Bulls are headed in the right direction. A few playmakers on both sides of the ball should keep the Bulls competitive in most of conference games, but they are not ready to challenge for a division title.

TOP NEWCOMER

OL Jaden Cotton: The offensive line was an area in need of an upgrade, and the 6-6, 330-pound Cotton has the potential to address that right away. The Bulls love his physicality and expect his strength to soon be off the charts.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	15	Alex Zordich	6-2	224	Jr.
RB	**32**	**Branden Oliver***	**5-8**	**204**	**Jr.**
WR	**19**	**Alex Neutz***	**6-4**	**209**	**Jr.**
WR	85	Cordero Dixon	6-0	189	So.
WR	18	Fred Lee	6-2	204	Jr.
TE	81	Jimmy Gordon	6-4	260	Jr.
LT	**50**	**Andre Davis***	**6-4**	**305**	**So.**
LG	**56**	**Jasen Carlson***	**6-3**	**307**	**Jr.**
C	71	Trevor Sales	6-1	314	Jr.
RG	**55**	**Graham Whinery***	**6-4**	**297**	**Sr.**
RT	**79**	**Gokhan Ozkan***	**6-7**	**330**	**Sr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	**40**	**Steven Means***	**6-3**	**260**	**Sr.**
NG	97	Wyatt Cahill	6-4	285	Sr.
DE	34	Colby Way	6-4	270	Jr.
LB	**46**	**Khalil Mack***	**6-3**	**244**	**Jr.**
LB	**36**	**Lee Skinner***	**6-2**	**237**	**So.**
LB	**44**	**Jaleel Verser***	**6-6**	**239**	**Sr.**
LB	47	Imani Chatman	6-3	222	Sr.
CB	**22**	**Najja Johnson***	**6-0**	**194**	**Jr.**
CB	**4**	**Cortney Lester***	**6-0**	**184**	**So.**
SS	**8**	**Isaac Baugh***	**5-11**	**205**	**Sr.**
FS	38	Witney Sherry	6-0	195	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**45**	**Patrick Clarke***	**6-2**	**205**	**So.**
P	45	Patrick Clarke	6-2	205	So.

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Georgia
Sept. 8	MORGAN STATE
Sept. 19/20	KENT STATE
Sept. 29	at Connecticut
Oct. 6	at Ohio
Oct. 13	at Northern Illinois
Oct. 20	PITTSBURGH
Oct. 27	TOLEDO
Nov. 3	MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 10	WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 17	at Massachusetts
Nov. 23	vs. Bowling Green (Coumbus, OH)

2011 RESULTS

L	at Pittsburgh	16-35
W	STONY BROOK	35-7
L	at Ball State	25-28
L	CONNECTICUT	3-17
L	at Tennessee	10-41
W	OHIO	38-37
L	at Temple	0-34
L	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	30-31
L	at Miami (OH)	13-41
L	at Eastern Michigan	17-30
W	AKRON	51-10
L	BOWLING GREEN	28-42

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.2	97
Rushing	155.0	60
Passing	210.2	76
Total	365.2	80

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.4	83
Rushing	181.2	86
Pass	203.7	36
Total	384.8	63

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
-2	-0.17	78

MICHIGAN STATE SPARTANS

For more coverage of the Spartans, visit michiganstate.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dan Roushar | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Pat Narduzzi** | **STADIUM: Spartan Stadium: 75,005**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
11-3, 7-2 Big Ten (1st, Legends)

COACH:
Mark Dantonio — At Michigan State: 44-22, 6 years; overall: 62-39, 9 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 4 offense, 8 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Andrew Maxwell, RB Le'Veon Bell, DE William Gholston, DE Marcus Rush, LB Denicos Allen, CB Johnny Adams, SS Isaiah Lewis

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The bulk of a defense that ranked sixth in the nation last season returns, including Gholston and Adams, both likely first-round NFL draft picks. A veteran offensive line and backfield, led by Bell, should help the Spartans do much better than 11th in the Big Ten in rushing, as they were in 2011.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Michigan State's projected top three wide-outs (Tony Lippett, Bennie Fowler and Keith Mumphery) caught a combined eight passes last season and struggled to stay healthy this spring, as did Maxwell, the first-year starting quarterback. In other words, there are plenty of questions about the Spartans' passing game.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Kirk Cousins, RB Edwin Baker, WR B.J. Cunningham, WR Keshawn Martin, TE Brian Linthicum, DT Jerel Worthy, S Trenton Robinson

OVERVIEW:
After 22 wins in two seasons, Michigan State expects nothing less than that kind of success this year, or any year. The defense appears to be in place for another run at a Big Ten title. But Maxwell has yet to throw a meaningful college pass. With divisional foes Michigan and Nebraska both boasting similarly big expectations, there isn't much leeway for growing pains.

Spartans' Confidence Brimming under Dantonio

College football coaches often temper expectations when speaking months before the start of a season. But Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio isn't hiding from what he's built.

A Big Ten co-championship, a division title, an Outback Bowl victory over an SEC foe — and 22 victories over the past two seasons — have changed the vibe in East Lansing.

It's clear Dantonio believes his defense-led club can live up to the new standard.

"We're in good shape defensively. I can pretty much say with confidence, we're going to be pretty good," the Spartans' six-year coach said this spring.

"We can run; we'll tackle," Dantonio added after the spring game. "We can do the things that need to be done on the defensive side of the ball that allows you to be successful."

The definition of success has changed, however, both internally and externally — and even since the Jan. 2 Outback Bowl.

"After the bowl game, we (came up with), 'OK, no more Rose Bowl, we want a national championship,'" junior linebacker Denicos Allen said.

"I think a lot of people should consider us being a national championship contender, especially with the defense we have. ... Personally, I think it's the best."

The Spartans do return the bulk of the Big Ten's best defense. As for contending for the national championship, Michigan State fans wouldn't mind settling for the program's first trip to Pasadena in a quarter century.

If it were to happen, it would come with a new quarterback — junior Andrew Maxwell — a slew of unproven wide-outs and without six players selected in April's NFL Draft. Among them were the school's all-time passing leader (Kirk Cousins), all-time leading receiver (B.J. Cunningham) and its disruptive mammoth defensive tackle (Jerel Worthy).

Dantonio's concern, however, isn't missing their talent.

"There is a void in leadership," he said. "It's not that we don't have good leaders. We have good leaders, but somebody has to take control of our football team.

"We really have good people and great chemistry on our football team, but somebody has to pull that leadership to them."

At a program that hasn't had a run like this since the mid-1960s and remains surrounded by a four-decade-old inferiority complex, leadership matters.

"I think we've laid a great foundation," Dantonio said. "We've won more in the past couple years than maybe ever before. But with that being said, we're still not to where we need to go, and we still have different things we need to be challenged with."

OFFENSE

Dantonio's first spring press conference was humming along without incident, until a reporter asked about starting running back Le'Veon Bell.

"I think it's important we're not complacent," Dantonio responded bluntly.

Nobody had said boo about complacency before that moment. But Dantonio spent the rest of the spring defending Bell and acting as if the media brought it up.

Be it a motivational ploy or simply honest discontent with the offseason work ethic of his bruising junior tailback, Dantonio likely wanted to make sure he'd be getting the best from the one offensive skill player he knows he can count on.

Bell unseated last season's starter

Le'Veon Bell
Photo by Eric Francis/Getty Images

Edwin Baker (a seventh-round pick of the San Diego Chargers) at midseason and finished with 948 yards rushing behind a young and banged-up offensive line.

That crew returns four starters and three others Dantonio considers of similar caliber, meaning the Big Ten's 11th-ranked rushing offense should move up considerably.

It might have to. There is nothing else on this offense that's proven — no quarterback, wideouts, tight ends or fullbacks.

There's enough perceived talent, beginning with junior quarterback Andrew Maxwell, that no one is panicking. But no one is sure what to expect, either. Any chance to figure that out during the spring was hampered by a bevy of injuries, including to Maxwell, who missed the final two weeks of spring practice with a sprained knee.

His offensive coordinator had seen enough to know he makes a difference.

"We need him in the huddle," said Dan Roushar, entering his second season directing the Spartans offense. "He makes our offense better because he's got a command of it. He can step in the huddle, demonstrate confidence. He can get us to the right play, into the right protections."

Figuring out his targets is another matter.

Possible go-to wideout junior Bennie Fowler missed all but a few snaps this spring recovering from surgery on a broken foot. Two other possible starters, sophomores Tony Lippett and Keith Mumphery battled their own injuries late in the spring. And none of the three has done enough — 22 career catches among them — to be certain commodities this fall.

There are intriguing players behind them. They include redshirt freshman Andre Sims Jr. (the first wideout selected by his teammates for the spring game) and sophomore DeAnthony Arnett, who was allowed by the NCAA to play immediately after transferring from Tennessee to be closer to his ailing father. Arnett caught 24 passes as a true freshman for the Volunteers last season.

DEFENSE

No one will say for certain how much defensive end William Gholston had to do with quarterback Andrew Maxwell's sprained knee during an April scrimmage. By all accounts, he was in on the play. He's in on seemingly every play.

A couple of series into the spring game, it looked as if the game might have to be called on account that no one could block the junior from Detroit.

On a defense full of speed, experience and depth, the 6-7, 275-pound Gholston stands out as a difference-maker — charming off the field, overwhelming and sometimes vicious on it (see the suspension-yielding punch delivered to Michigan's Taylor Lewan last season).

Johnny Adams
Photo by Steve Beyer

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Andrew Maxwell	Jr.	Fourth-year player takes over for Kirk Cousins.	Connor Cook, Fr.
RB	Le'Veon Bell	Jr.	Powerful player runs behind a veteran O-line.	Larry Caper, Sr.
FB	Niko Palazeti	So.	Better ball-carrier than other recent fullbacks.	Trevon Pendleton, Fr.
WR	Bennie Fowler	Jr.	Terrific talent, but has battled foot issues.	Keith Mumphery, So.
WR	Tony Lippett	So.	Back full time at WR; spring cut short by ankle injury.	Andre Sims Jr., Fr.
TE	Dion Sims	Jr.	Prototypical size and a threat in passing game.	Andrew Gleichert, So.
LT	Dan France*	Jr.	Second-year starter protecting QB's blindside.	Skyler Burkland, So.
LG	Blake Treadwell	Jr.	Only likely first-year starter on the O-line.	Jack Allen, Fr.
C	Travis Jackson*	So.	Started 10 games as a redshirt freshman.	Jack Allen, Fr.
RG	Chris McDonald*	Sr.	Third-year starter at right guard.	Connor Kruse, So.
RT	Fou Fonoti*	Sr.	JC transfer took over last year for injured Burkland.	Skyler Burkland, So.
K	Dan Conroy*	Sr.	Has made three 50-yarders in his career.	Kevin Muma, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Marcus Rush*	So.	Overlooked opposite Gholston, but shouldn't be.	Shilique Calhoun, Fr.
DT	Anthony Rashad White	Sr.	Moves over from NT to replace Jerel Worthy.	James Kittredge, So.
NT	Tyler Hoover	Sr.	In battle with Kittredge for starting spot.	James Kittredge, So.
DE	William Gholston*	Jr.	A game-changing talent and early NFL pick.	Joel Heath, Fr.
LB	Chris Norman*	Sr.	Third-year starter coming off shoulder surgery.	Darien Harris, Fr.
LB	Max Bullough*	Jr.	Critical leader on a unit without an obvious voice.	TyQuan Hammock, Jr.
LB	Denicos Allen*	Jr.	Second-team All-Big Ten as a sophomore.	Steve Gardiner, Sr.
CB	Darqueze Dennard*	Jr.	Shoulder injury in spring required surgery.	Trae Waynes, Fr.
CB	Johnny Adams*	Sr.	All-Big Ten DB might also play wideout.	Mitchell White, Sr.
SS	Isaiah Lewis*	Jr.	Steps into leadership role in secondary.	Jairus Jones, Jr.
FS	Kurtis Drummond	So.	Replaces 49ers draft pick Trenton Robinson.	R.J. Williamson, Fr.
P	Mike Sadler*	So.	Lefty averaged 41.1 yards per punt as freshman.	Kevin Muma, Jr.

*Returning Starter

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Aaron Burbridge
With B.J. Cunningham and Keith Nichol moving on in their careers following the 2011 season, Michigan State will likely call on one of their young wide receivers to play heavy minutes as a freshman. The 6-1, 175-pound Burbridge has the skill set that will make him most likely to answer that call.

Jamal Lyles
Originally projected to be a linebacker at the college level, Lyles continued to grow through his senior year of high school and will enter his freshman season close to 6-5, 240 pounds. He has the explosiveness to come off the edge as a pass-rusher, and the frame to grow into the position.

Demetrious Cox
Michigan State fought off the likes of Penn State and Ohio State to sign the 6-1, 192-pound Cox, and expect him to come in and bolster an already solid safety position. Cox has the talent and the confidence to make a move early in his career and demand playing time.

THE SLEEPER

Josiah Price
The 6-5, 240-pound Price comes from a small school in Indiana where he was asked to do everything, including play quarterback. He excelled in that role as a high school senior, but possesses all the tools to grow into a high level Big Ten performer at either tight end or defensive end.

Committments	18
Average Stars	3.11
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	3
★★★☆☆	14
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	56
National Rank: 41	Big Ten: 5

2013 NEEDS: Second-leading rusher Edwin Baker entered the NFL Draft and Larry Caper is entering his final season as a Spartan. That will leave Michigan State extremely low in the backfield entering the 2013 season and in need of help at the running back position. The offensive tackle position is also getting low on bodies and their 2012 cornerback position features three upperclassmen among their top three spots, so the Spartans will be in search of young talent to replenish that position.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Riley Bullough	LB	6-2	205	★★★	Traverse City, MI	St Francis Catholic
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 52 outside linebacker...Chose Michigan State over Cincinnati, Iowa, Western Michigan and Wisconsin.						
Aaron Burbridge	WR	6-1	180	★★★★	Farmington Hills, MI	Harrison
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Michigan...Rated as the nation's No. 16 wide receiver...Chose Michigan State over Cincinnati, Illinois, Michigan, Notre Dame and Ohio State.						
Demetrious Cox	DB	6-1	192	★★★★	Jeannette, PA	Jeannette
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 13 safety...Chose Michigan State over Ohio State, Penn State, Wisconsin and others.						
Jermaine Edmondson	DB	6-1	170	★★★	Canton, OH	McKinley
Selected to play in the Ohio North-South All-Star Game...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Had 41 tackles and 12 pass breakups as a senior.						
David Fennell	DT	6-3	274	★★	Portland, OR	Sunset
First-team all-state selection... Recorded 82 tackles, 10.5 tackles for loss and 5.5 sacks as a senior.						
Zach Higgins	OL	6-5	305	★★★	Alliance, OH	Marlington
Rated as the No. 47 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 69 offensive tackle.						
Evan Jones	TE	6-6	240	★★★	West Lafayette, OH	Ridgewood
Rated as the No. 52 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Chose Michigan State over Akron, Bowling Green, Toledo and West Virginia.						
Kyle Kerrick	WR	6-3	183	★★★	Coatesville, PA	Coatesville Area Senior
Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com...Chose Michigan State over Akron, Cincinnati, Illinois, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Temple and West Virginia.						
Kodi Kieler	OL	6-6	305	★★★	Gibraltar, MI	Carlson
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Selected to play in the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association 2012 East-West All-Star Game.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Macgarrett Kings Jr.	WR	5-11	178	★★★	Fort Lauderdale, FL	University School
Rated as the No. 91 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 86 wide receiver...Participated in the Nike South Florida All-Star Game.						
Jamal Lyles	DE	6-5	240	★★★★	Southfield, MI	Lathrup
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 18 weakside defensive end...Chose Michigan State over Illinois, Iowa, Pittsburgh, Stanford, Vanderbilt and others.						
Monty Madaris	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Cincinnati, OH	Moeller
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 54 wide receiver...Had 56 receptions for 1,137 yards and 16 touchdowns as a senior.						
Benny McGowan	OL	6-4	290	★★★	Centerville, OH	Centerville
Rated as the No. 55 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 40 offensive guard...Chose Michigan State over Iowa, UCLA and others.						
Mark Meyers	DB	6-0	180	★★★	Toledo, OH	Whitmer
Recorded 97 tackles, five tackles for loss and three interceptions as a senior...Switched commitment from Toledo to Michigan State.						
Tyler O'Connor	QB	6-3	202	★★★	Lima, OH	Lima Central Catholic
Rated as the No. 32 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 18 pro-style quarterback...Threw for 2,516 yards and 27 touchdowns as a junoir.						
Josiah Price	TE	6-5	240	★★★	Greentown, IN	Eastern Jr/Sr
Rated as the No. 6 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 tight end...Had 39 receptions for 524 yards and four touchdowns as a senior.						
Ezra Robinson	DB	6-0	174	★★★	Sarasota, FL	Booker
Rated as the nation's No. 52 cornerback by Rivals.com...First-team all-state selection...Had seven pass breakups and two interceptions as a senior.						
Nick Tompkins	RB	5-10	185	★★★	Snellville, GA	Brookwood
Rated as the No. 44 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 11 all-purpose back...Participated in the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association North-South All-Star Football Classic.						

SPARTANS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
5	Johnny Adams	CB	5-11	175	Sr.	Akron, OH
28	Denicos Allen	LB	5-11	232	Jr.	Hamilton, OH
66	Jack Allen	C	6-1	292	Fr.	Hinsdale, IL
5	DeAnthony Arnett	WR	5-11	170	So.	Saginaw
25	Kyle Artinian	S	5-11	196	Fr.	Grand Blanc
12	Peter Badovinac	QB	6-2	220	Sr.	Inverness, IL
24	Le'Veon Bell	RB	6-2	238	So.	Reynoldsburg, OH
30	Jordan Benton	WR	6-0	190	Jr.	Los Angeles, CA
45	Jeff Bobek	FB	6-1	247	Sr.	Palatine, IL
40	Max Bullough	LB	6-3	252	Jr.	Traverse City
70	Skyler Burkland	OT	6-7	315	So.	Sunbury, OH
11	Juwan Caesar	WR	6-4	209	Fr.	Miami, FL
94	Taylor Calero	DE	6-2	248	So.	Beverly Hills
89	Shilique Calhoun	DE	6-4	240	Fr.	Middletown, NJ
22	Larry Caper	RB	5-11	221	Sr.	Battle Creek
76	Donavon Clark	OG	6-3	295	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
87	Brandon Clemons	DL	6-3	274	Fr.	Milford, PA
36	Arjen Colquhoun	CB	6-1	189	Fr.	Windsor, Ontario
4	Dan Conroy	K	5-10	194	Sr.	Wheaton, IL
77	Henry Conway	OT	6-6	325	Jr.	Shaker Heights, OH
18	Connor Cook	QB	6-4	215	Fr.	Hinckley, OH
65	Doug Curtis	DT	6-2	253	Sr.	Weston, CT
43	Ed Davis	LB	6-3	220	Fr.	Detroit
31	Darqueze Dennard	CB	5-11	190	Jr.	Dry Branch, GA
65	Michael Dennis	OT	6-6	309	So.	Carey, OH
71	John Deyo	OG	6-6	305	Sr.	Battle Creek
12	Dana Dixon	WR	6-2	170	Jr.	Detroit
52	Denzel Drone	TE/DE	6-2	262	Jr.	Plant City, FL
27	Kurtis Drummond	S	6-1	197	So.	Masury, OH
29	Spencer Elliott	WR	6-0	195	Fr.	Ada
41	Kyler Elsworth	LB	6-1	215	Jr.	Goodrich
19	Danny Folino	LB	5-9	206	Jr.	Okemos
51	Fou Fonoti	OT	6-4	300	Sr.	Lakewood, CA
13	Bennie Fowler	WR	6-1	218	Jr.	Bloomfield
59	Dan France	OT	6-6	316	Jr.	North Royalton, OH
55	Corey Freeman	DE	6-2	258	Sr.	Cleveland Heights, OH
47	Jeremy Gainer	DE	6-1	231	Jr.	Detroit
50	Steve Gardiner	LB	6-1	218	Sr.	Dublin, OH
2	William Gholston	DE	6-7	275	Jr.	Detroit
58	Matt Giampapa	SN	6-2	245	So.	Jackson, TN
92	Andrew Gleichert	TE	6-5	256	So.	Ann Arbor
42	Ty Hamilton	LB	6-0	235	So.	Fenton
49	TyQuan Hammock	LB	6-0	237	Jr.	Fort Wayne, IN
45	Darien Harris	LB	6-0	210	Fr.	Silver Spring, MD
92	Joel Heath	DE	6-5	277	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
6	Mylan Hicks	CB	5-11	190	So.	Detroit
20	Nick Hill	RB	5-8	190	So.	Chelsea
84	Derek Hoebing	TE	6-6	270	Jr.	Vermilion, OH
91	Tyler Hoover	DT	6-7	295	Sr.	Novi
63	Travis Jackson	C	6-3	280	So.	New Albany, OH
89	John Jakubik	WR	6-1	190	So.	Plymouth
23	Jairus Jones	S	6-1	205	Jr.	Tampa, FL
34	Taiwan Jones	LB	6-3	234	So.	New Baltimore
69	Shawn Kamm	OL	6-7	312	So.	Saginaw
4	Kyle Kerrick	WR	6-3	197	Fr.	Coatesville, PA
99	James Kittredge	DT	6-4	271	So.	Ramsey, NJ
72	Nate Klatt	OG	6-4	290	Jr.	Clinton, OH
93	Damon Knox	DT	6-4	280	Fr.	Muskegon
54	Connor Kruse	OG	6-5	306	So.	Lowell
35	Chris Laneaux	S	5-11	192	Fr.	Kalamazoo
83	Paul Lang	TE	6-5	247	Fr.	Pittsburgh, PA
33	Jeremy Langford	RB	6-0	208	So.	Wayne
9	Isaiah Lewis	S	5-10	195	Jr.	Indianapolis, IN
53	Kyle Lints	C	6-3	278	Fr.	Traverse City
14	Tony Lippett	WR	6-2	189	So.	Detroit
10	Andrew Maxwell	QB	6-3	212	Jr.	Midland
62	Chris McDonald	OG	6-5	299	Sr.	Sterling Heights
53	Steve Moore	SN	6-3	220	Jr.	Pinconning
17	Kevin Muma	K	6-0	189	Jr.	Troy
25	Keith Mumphery	WR	6-0	208	So.	Vienna, GA
10	Chris Norman	LB	6-1	230	Sr.	Detroit
38	Niko Palazeti	FB	6-1	250	So.	Northville
37	Trevon Pendleton	FB	5-11	245	Fr.	Lucasville, OH
56	Matt Ramondo	NT	6-5	320	Fr.	Las Cruces, NM
73	Arthur Ray, Jr.	OG	6-3	300	Sr.	Chicago, IL
60	Micajah Reynolds	DT	6-5	320	Jr.	Lansing
48	Pat Rhomberg	LB	6-0	225	Fr.	Columbus, OH
68	Ethan Ruhland	OG	6-5	290	Sr.	Lake Orion
44	Marcus Rush	DE	6-2	250	So.	Cincinnati, OH
3	Mike Sadler	P	6-0	183	So.	Grand Rapids
97	Mark Scarpinato	NT	6-3	279	Fr.	Milwaukee, WI
21	Andre Sims, Jr.	WR	5-9	187	Fr.	Snellville, GA
80	Dion Sims	TE	6-5	280	Jr.	Detroit
48	Drew Stevens	TE	6-4	242	Sr.	Delaware, OH
8	Lawrence Thomas	LB	6-3	280	Fr.	Detroit
64	Blake Treadwell	OG	6-3	299	Jr.	East Lansing
19	AJ Troup	WR	6-3	200	Fr.	Minneapolis, MN
16	Tommy Vento	QB	6-1	199	Fr.	Farmington Hills
15	Trae Waynes	CB	6-1	175	Fr.	Kenosha, WI
98	Anthony Rashad White	NT	6-2	320	Sr.	Battle Creek
32	Mitchell White	CB	5-11	180	Sr.	Livonia
26	RJ Williamson	S	5-10	200	Fr.	Middletown, OH

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Cousins	14	145.1	267	419	10	63.7	3316	25	69	236.9
A. Maxwell	4	137.2	18	26	0	69.2	171	1	31	42.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Cunningham	14	79	1306	16.5	12	69	93.3
K. Martin	14	66	777	11.8	4	67	55.5
L. Bell	14	35	267	7.6	0	45	19.1

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
L. Bell	14	182	987	39	948	5.2	13	35	67.7
E. Baker	14	170	721	56	665	3.9	5	25	47.5
L. Caper	11	30	121	5	116	3.9	1	16	10.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M. Bullough 89, D. Allen 83, T. Robinson 80
Tackles for loss: D. Allen 18.5, W. Gholston 16, M. Rush 12
Sacks: D. Allen 11, W. Gholston 5, two tied with 4
Interceptions: T. Robinson 4, I. Lewis 4, two tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

Michigan State's rivalry with Michigan is becoming less one-sided and more compelling every time the Spartans beat the Wolverines. They're at four straight now for those counting (and everyone in East Lansing and Ann Arbor is well aware).

Making it more interesting are the fairly consistent public reminders from Michigan State coach **Mark Dantonio** that, "Times have changed," as he said on national television after last year's Spartan win.

This spring, Dantonio filled a days worth of blog fodder again, responding to a question regarding the Wolverines' return to prominence by saying, "We've beat Michigan the last four years. So where's the threat?"

The Spartans go for five in a row on Oct. 20 in Ann Arbor.

• Senior all-conference cornerback **Johnny Adams** is an option at wideout if Michigan State's young receivers can't move the chains. Adams played the position for one series during the spring game, catching a 45-yard deep ball on his first play, which began a 97-yard touchdown drive.

"He's got big-play ability," Dantonio said of Adams. "He's a guy maybe we can flip around a little bit."

• Michigan State not only lost its top three receivers from last season, its top receiving tight end, Brian Linthicum, ran out of eligibility, too.

The Spartans are hoping 6-5, 280-pound junior **Dion Sims** — who caught 12 passes for 99 yards and three scores a year ago — can become a consistent threat for quarterback **Andrew Maxwell**. The early returns look good.

Sims led Michigan State with four catches for 73 yards in the spring game, all while playing with a club-like cast protecting his broken left hand.

• Former NFL and Michigan State star receiver **Andre Rison** is joining the Spartans' coaching staff as a student assistant. Rison, who coached Flint Northwestern High School over the past two seasons, said he'll complete his degree (he's been 30 credits short since 1989) while helping coach the Michigan State wideouts.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"I saw all 12 teams in spring practice, and Michigan State was, to me, the best team in the Big Ten after the spring. From top to bottom, they were the most talented and the most balanced. Obviously, the development of Andrew Maxwell, being a first-time starting quarterback, will be key. But more than Maxwell, last year they were 11th in the conference in rushing. They have to be somewhere in the middle to meet their expectations.

"This is the most talented defense in the league. Coordinator Pat Narduzzi has just been unbelievable in the past couple of years. He's pressured more; he's taken more chances. (Will) Gholston continues to improve. They're deep at linebacker. Their secondary is skilled. Relative to the other Big Ten schools, they don't have a weakness on defense."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

William Gholston
Photo by Scott Boehm

The Spartans, who sacked opposing quarterbacks a Big Ten-best 45 times last season, return their entire starting front seven from the end of last season, sans Green Bay Packers second-round pick Jerel Worthy.

That includes "four or five very good defensive ends" in Dantonio's eyes, led by Gholston and sophomore Marcus Rush.

Inside, Michigan State intends to replace Worthy with seniors Anthony Rashad White, Tyler Hoover and sophomore James Kittredge. White appears to be the player most likely directly in Worthy's spot.

"Losing Jerel, that's a big thing," said White, who started four games last season at nose tackle next to Worthy. "But (he and I) already discussed, 'You're not losing anybody, because it's your turn.'"

Said Dantonio: "There's no question he can play and be very physical in there and dominate for us."

The collective strength of this defense, however, is probably at linebacker, where the trio of senior Chris Norman and juniors Max Bullough and Denicos Allen is back. That's 248 tackles and 16.5 sacks (11 from Allen) from last season — more returning production at the position than at any other Big Ten program.

"You'd think the ball was going to break out and all of a sudden everything would close up quickly," Dantonio said after watching his linebackers this spring.

The secondary isn't in bad shape, either, having lost safety — and vocal leader — Trenton Robinson to the NFL, but no one else.

Two-time All-Big Ten cornerback Johnny Adams flirted with the idea of leaving for the pros. Instead, he stuck around and may find himself featured on both sides of the ball.

Perhaps just as important as all this returning personnel is the return of Pat Narduzzi. The Spartans' smooth-talking defensive coordinator was wooed by Texas A&M, among others, but came back to coach a defense that ranked sixth in college football a year ago.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior kicker Dan Conroy is 31 of 38 on field-goal attempts in two seasons as the Spartans' primary kicker, earning first-team All-Big Ten honors as a sophomore and honorable mention last season. He's made 11 field goals of 40 yards or more, including three 50-yarders.

Junior Kevin Muma is expected to

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DE William Gholston

An imposing and disruptive 6-7, 275-pound defensive end who's projected to be a first-round NFL Draft pick next season. ... Dominated both spring scrimmages and the spring game, before surviving a rollover car crash unscathed a few days later. ... A second-team All-Big Ten selection as a sophomore after recording 16 tackles for loss in 13 games, including five in the Spartans' Outback Bowl win over Georgia.

EMERGING STAR

RB Le'Veon Bell

A powerful runner at 6-2, 238 pounds, Bell took over as the starting running back last season and rushed for 948 yards at 5.2 yards per carry. ... His offseason "complacency" was questioned by coach Mark Dantonio before spring practice, but Bell left the spring as Spartans' unquestioned No. 1 rusher. ... The once unheralded recruit has 21 touchdowns in 27 career games. ... Had a season-high 112 yards against Iowa last season.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Andre Sims Jr.

The 5-9, 187-pound redshirt freshman jumped onto the radar when he was chosen in the spring game player draft ahead of more accomplished and heralded receivers. Senior linebacker Chris Norman explained the pick: "We just wanted a guy who can score, catch the ball and make a few plays. And Andre Sims has been doing a really good job of that." ... Sims didn't disappoint, catching three passes for 22 yards, including the game's only touchdown pass — a 3-yard strike in the back of the end zone.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.7	36
Rushing	136.9	73
Passing	269.4	28
Total	406.2	38
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	26.3	67
Rushing	113.2	24
Passing	267.6	112
Total	380.9	73
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 6	- 0.46	94

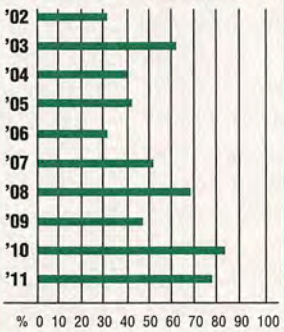
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.5	47
Rushing	152.1	64
Passing	236.4	46
Total	388.5	53
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.3	39
Rushing	133.7	37
Passing	220.1	60
Total	353.8	43
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.38	31

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.0	37
Rushing	137.9	78
Passing	252.5	41
Total	390.4	56
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	18.4	10
Rushing	100.5	9
Pass	176.9	11
Total	277.4	6
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 7	+ 0.50	26

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

	11-3, 7-2	
W	YOUNGSTOWN STATE	28-6
W	FAU	44-0
L	at Notre Dame	13-31
W	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	45-7
W	at Ohio State	10-7
W	MICHIGAN	28-14
W	WISCONSIN	37-31
L	at Nebraska	3-24
W	MINNESOTA	31-24
W	at Iowa	37-21
W	INDIANA	55-3
W	at Northwestern	31-17
	Big Ten Championship Game	
L	Wisconsin	39-42
	Outback Bowl	
W	vs. Georgia (3OT)	33-30

PLAYER PROFILE

Andrew Maxwell
Photo by Scott Boehm

Maxwell Adjusting To Life in Spotlight

For Andrew Maxwell, who had spent so much time living in relative anonymity, the autograph seekers caught him by surprise.

"I had a 15-year-old girl stop me after the Michigan State-Michigan hockey game. She stopped me and asked for a picture," the junior quarterback said. "I had another girl stop me and asked for a picture on the sidewalk. I said, 'You guys realize I haven't started a game yet, right?'"

Maxwell's days of going unnoticed at Michigan State around campus and at Spartan Stadium are over. He is replacing the winningest quarterback in school history on a team with designs on winning even bigger.

"I don't think the pressure comes from having to replace Kirk (Cousins) as a quarterback," Maxwell said of his predecessor, a fourth-round draft pick of the Washington Redskins. "I think where the extra pressure comes in is where our program is right now."

The Spartans have put together back-to-back 11-win seasons, with Maxwell mostly watching.

His body of work is limited to nine games, usually mop-up duty, over two seasons as Cousins' backup. The 6-3 Midland, Mich., native completed 29 of 51 passes for 294 yards and one touchdown in those appearances.

But his debut spring as the starter was cut short by a sprained right knee suffered in a mid-April scrimmage.

"I feel like I was hitting my stride," Maxwell said after the injury.

"I feel like I was getting pretty comfortable out there as far as leadership, being in the huddle, being comfortable being the No. 1 guy — all the things that I just had in my mind that I wanted to get done before spring (was over), I feel like I was getting comfortable and getting those things accomplished."

What'll matter this fall is wins and losses — any love he's feeling from Spartan fans these days is conditional. But at least he'll begin with the respect of his teammates.

"I mean Maxwell is going into his fourth year here," center Travis Jackson said.

"Huge thing, we respect him a lot. He has a lot of knowledge. He's studied his playbook three, four years now. He's just been waiting his turn. He knows the whole offense, he knows everything. He's a great leader, listens, commands people as well. And I think he's going to have an awesome year this year."

handle kickoffs again, while punter Mike Sadler averaged better than 41 yards an attempt as a true freshman.

The questions are more in the return game, where Keshawn Martin (three career returns for touchdowns) has moved on to the NFL. Sophomore running back Nick Hill might be the answer on both punt and kickoff returns, though that's far from settled.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

It'd be harder to find a pre-October home schedule with more marquee opponents. Boise State, Notre Dame and Ohio State all visit Spartan Stadium during the season's first five weeks.

There won't be any time for new quarterback Andrew Maxwell to ease into the starter's role, with Boise State in town for a Friday night opener on Aug. 31. The Broncos have beaten Georgia, Virginia Tech and Oregon in their last three openers, with the wins over Georgia and Virginia Tech coming on the road.

However, the stretch that's likely to determine the Spartans' Rose Bowl chances comes in late October and early November, when Michigan State travels to Michigan and Wisconsin on consecutive weeks and then hosts Nebraska.

The Oct. 20 date in Ann Arbor could be the most anticipated game in the history of the Michigan State-Michigan rivalry, with both programs seemingly Top-10 caliber and the Spartans having beaten the Wolverines in four straight years.

— Graham Couch

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Aug. 31	BOISE STATE	12-1
Sept. 8	at Central Michigan	3-9
Sept. 15	NOTRE DAME	8-5
Sept. 22	EASTERN MICHIGAN	6-6
Sept. 29	OHIO STATE	6-7
Oct. 6	at Indiana	1-11
Oct. 13	IOWA	7-6
Oct. 20	at Michigan	11-2
Oct. 27	at Wisconsin	11-3
Nov. 3	NEBRASKA	9-4
Nov. 17	NORTHWESTERN	6-7
Nov. 24	at Minnesota	3-9

CENTRAL MICHIGAN | CHIPPEWAS

MAC rank: 12 Record: 3-9 MAC record: 2-6 (6th, West) Stadium: Kelly/Shorts Stadium (30,255)

By Jeff Arnold

Photo by Mark Zerof-US PRESSWIRE

"This can be the best team on the field I've had since I've been here."
— Coach Dan Enos

CHIPPEWAS at a GLANCE

COACH: Dan Enos — At Central Michigan and overall: 6-18, 2 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Cummings
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joe Tumpkin

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2009
LAST BOWL: 2009, GMAC
RETURNING STARTERS: 18; 9 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Ryan Radcliff, RB Zurlon Tipton, RB Anthony Garland, WR Titus Davis, LB Cody Lopez, DB Jahleel Addae, DB Avery Cunningham, K David Harman

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Radcliff is the established leader on offense and has more experienced personnel — especially at receiver — around him. The defense also should be stouter, returning its top three tacklers from last year, including Addae, an All-MAC defensive back.
PRIMARY PROBLEMS: Finding a playmaker at running back is likely the biggest concern. Neither Tipton nor Garland has the experience of being a top back; one or both must emerge quickly if the running game is to be a factor.

OFFENSE

Senior quarterback Ryan Radcliff anchors a unit that is a lot more experienced than last year, when a host of true freshmen had to make major contributions.

Radcliff returns for his final season, a year after leading the MAC with 2,491 passing yards in league games. He threw for 25 touchdowns on the season. The biggest issue with Radcliff will be limiting his mistakes; he was intercepted 16 times.

While Radcliff is the clear front-runner, Cody Kater, who transferred from Cincinnati, gives the Chippewas an immediate insurance policy.

Both of Radcliff's top receivers — sophomore Titus Davis (751 yards, eight touchdowns) and senior Cody Wilson — return, shoring up a corps that registered 3,290 receiving yards last year.

The biggest hole is at tight end, where Connor Odykirk, Caleb Southworth and Jarrett Fleming will compete to replace David Blackburn, the Chippewas' third-leading receiver (34 catches, 479 yards) last season.

The Chippewas must also establish a new feature back to replace two-time leading rusher Paris Cotton. Sophomore Anthony Garland, who ran for 378 yards and a touchdown as a freshman, along with Zurlon Tipton, could fill the playmaking ability left by Cotton's departure.

Tipton looked impressive with a 114-yard, two-touchdown effort in the spring game.

Austin White, who transferred from Michigan, was expected to contend for a starting job at running back. But four days after spring practice ended, coach Dan Enos announced White was one of three players released from the program.

DEFENSE

Senior first-team All-MAC defensive back Jahleel Addae led the Chippewas with 107 tackles last season, while also pacing the MAC with four interceptions. Backfield mate Avery Cunningham (79 tackles) also returns.

A more veteran presence — starting with linebacker Cody Lopez — should benefit a defense that allowed 33.3 points per game.

Lopez was third in tackles last year as a sophomore, but should help provide more stability on a defensive front that also returns a wealth of talent, headlined by senior defensive end Joe Kinville. He made 12 starts and had at least four tackles in each of seven games.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior David Harman was consistent last season, connecting on 13 of 16 field-goal attempts. Junior punter Richie Hogan also gained experience as a first-time starter when he forced opponents into 20 fair catches and placed 18 punts inside the 20-yard-line.

OVERALL

Last season's 3-9 finish was indicative of a team playing with 17 first-time starters. But even with the youth that defined Enos' team, the Chippewas had six games decided by seven points or less. Of Central Michigan's nine losses, five were by a combined 19 points.

Despite stiff Big Ten tests against Michigan State and Iowa, the Chippewas should be better, especially in tight games. They play seven home games and just need to be a little better to make a jump up the MAC West standings.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Cody Kater: The 6-3, 230-pound Kater started his career at Cincinnati, but spent last year at Grand Rapids (Mich.) Community College. He has the potential for the starting job, but, at the least, he gives the Chippewas a dependable backup and a go-to quarterback once Radcliff finishes his career.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	8	Ryan Radcliff*	6-3	215	Sr.
RB	34	Zurlon Tipton	6-1	222	Jr.
WR	11	Cody Wilson*	5-10	189	Sr.
WR	84	Titus Davis*	6-2	185	So.
WR	81	Jerry Harris*	6-3	185	Sr.
TE	89	Connor Odykirk	6-4	237	Jr.
LT	79	Eric Fisher*	6-8	305	Sr.
LG	67	Mike Repovz*	6-5	290	Sr.
C	66	Andy Phillips*	6-3	302	So.
RG	65	Darren Keyton*	6-3	300	Sr.
RT	60	Kevin Henry*	6-5	300	So.
DEFENSE					
DE	93	Joe Kinville*	6-4	260	Sr.
DT	55	Steve Winston*	6-1	260	Sr.
NG	50	Matt Losiniecki*	6-1	267	So.
DE	99	Caesar Rodriguez	6-2	241	Sr.
LB	51	Cody Lopez	6-1	218	So.
LB	22	Ryan Petro	6-0	218	So
LB	26	Shamari Benton	6-0	220	Jr.
CB	28	Dennis Nalor	6-0	178	So.
CB	2	Lorenzo White*	6-0	180	Sr.
SS	4	Jahleel Addae*	5-11	195	Sr.
FS	36	Avery Cunningham*	6-0	201	Jr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	96	David Harman*	6-0	182	Sr.
P	13	Richie Hogan*	6-2	203	Jr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2012 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE
Sept. 8	MICHIGAN STATE
Sept. 22	at Iowa
Sept. 29	at Northern Illinois
Oct. 6	at Toledo
Oct. 13	NAVY
Oct. 20	BALL STATE
Oct. 27	AKRON
Nov. 3	WESTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 10	at Eastern Michigan
Nov. 17	MIAMI (OH)
Nov. 23	at Massachusetts

2011 RESULTS

W	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	21-6
L	at Kentucky	13-27
L	at Western Michigan	14-44
L	at Michigan State	7-45
W	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	48-41
L	at NC State	24-38
L	EASTERN MICHIGAN	28-35
L	at Ball State	27-31
W	at Akron	23-22
L	at Kent State	21-24
L	OHIO	28-43
L	TOLEDO	17-44

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	22.6	92
Rushing	115.8	98
Passing	274.2	25
Total	389.9	57

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	33.3	99
Rushing	187.0	93
Passing	241.8	80
Total	428.8	96

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
-12	-1.00	114

MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS

For more coverage of the Golden Gophers, visit minnesota.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt Limegrover **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tracy Claeys** **STADIUM: TCF Bank Stadium: 50,000**

AT A GLANCE

2011 RECORD:
3-9 overall, 2-6 Big Ten (6th, Legends)

COACH:
Jerry Kill — At Minnesota: 3-9, 1 year; overall: 130-82, 18 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 5 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB MarQueis Gray, RB James Gillum, SR Marcus Jones, DT Ra'Shede Hageman, LB Mike Rallis, CB Michael Carter, CB/RET Troy Stoudermire

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Gray appears ready to have a breakthrough after a season learning a new system. He is a threat both throwing and running. The Gophers have found some defensive linemen, anchored by tackle Hageman. An experienced cornerback situation, keyed by Stoudermire, is another promising starting point.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The Gophers have a lot of speed at the receiver position, but it's young. Only one receiver has caught a touchdown pass. On defense, the Gophers missed far too many tackles last season. The coaches have stressed speed over size this season hoping to change that.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Duane Bennett, WR Da'Jon McKnight, LB Gary Tinsley, FS Kim Royston

OVERVIEW: Kill spent much of his first season battling epileptic seizures. Kill is better, but will his team be? The team is still young, and the realistic goal is to be competitive down the road rather than right away. But here's the good news: Adjustments have been made and the players have now learned the new offensive and defensive schemes. Modest goals are a better non-conference record and vying for a lower-tier bowl game.

Young Gophers Set Sights on Postseason Goal

It might be hard to find, digging through the debris of a difficult 2011 season, but Minnesota coach Jerry Kill saw progress in the team he coached for the first time last year.

He saw quarterback MarQueis Gray improve toward the end of the season. Despite horrifying losses to New Mexico State and North Dakota State, the Gophers won Big Ten Conference games against Iowa and — in the season finale — Illinois.

And now Kill and his staff, having put in a year learning the personnel and the conference, feel like they've hit the ground running this year.

"I think it's like getting older," Kill said. "Each year that you get older, you get a little bit wiser. You get to know a little bit more. I've been here a year or so. I'm still trying to figure out some things. ... I feel much more comfortable, and the coaching staff is all here. We didn't lose anybody. We have a little bit of continuity going."

But continuity alone won't answer the raft of questions facing the Gophers in 2012.

With barely a dozen seniors on the roster, there is a dearth of experience.

Gray appears poised for a breakthrough, but the team needs to find players for him to throw to.

The offensive line is big and strong, but it is young. Who will emerge as the primary running back?

And can a slew of position switches on defense — designed to emphasize speed over size — improve a unit that resided at or near the bottom in the conference in just about every significant category last year?

With two recruiting classes under his belt and a number of underclassmen figuring to get major playing time, this is still a team that is building for the long-term future. The Gophers program is pointed toward 2014 or 2015, but how about right now?

Kill, who dealt with a series of epileptic seizures last season, is healthy. With the team and the coaches on the same page in Year Two, practices are smoother and more productive.

Fans should expect a team that will be better prepared at the start, meaning the soft non-conference schedule should provide a quick start. If that happens, should the Gophers manage a few victories in the Big Ten, they should be in position to be bowl eligible.

And if that were to happen, Kill would have to consider his second season a success.

OFFENSE

There is one certainty when it comes to the Gophers offense:

"We've got a quarterback," Kill said. We've got to get everybody else to step it up around him."

Gray's physical skills are manifest. He is fast, powerful and elusive as a runner, having led the team with 966 rushing yards last season. And after an intense offseason devoted to improving technique, his passing figures to improve.

Gray completed 108 of 213 passes for 1,495 yards, with eight touchdowns and eight interceptions, last season. His passing efficiency rating of 114.5 ranked only 93rd in the nation. He passed for more than 200 yards in a game just twice.

But even if Gray's passing does improve, offensive coordinator Matt Limegrover will have to answer a lot of questions in order for his option attack to flourish. To wit:

Who will run the ball?

Injuries and ineptitude irritated the

Mike Rallis
Photo by Steve Beyer

coaches last season, with no returning running back getting more than 63 carries. That's one big reason why junior college transfer James Gillum appears to be the leader for the starting spot.

"You don't bring in a junior college tailback to stand beside Coach Kill on Saturdays," Limegrover said. "We feel he's an SEC-caliber back. The best ones are the ones who you can hand the ball to and you don't have to tell him where the holes are. And that's James."

If that's true, it's critical. Gray needs to have some pressure taken off of him, which leads us to:

Who will catch the ball?

Senior Brandon Green is the only receiver on the roster with a touchdown catch. Talk about a position being wide open.

That's why so many expectations are being placed on speedy slot receiver Marcus Jones, who is coming back from ligament knee surgery that ended his 2011 season after seven games. He showed enough as a true freshman in those seven games (nine receptions for 142 yards, and a kick return touchdown) to warrant heightened expectations.

After that? The Gophers have to hope Devin Crawford-Tufts emerges as a sophomore.

And finally:

Who will block for Gray?

The offensive line has size and strength and — according to the coaches — potential. Injuries forced Limegrover to use 12 different linemen for significant stretches last season.

"It was tough," Limegrover said. "But now we reap the benefits of that experience."

Ten of those 12 linemen are back, but there are no seniors and just two juniors in that group. Minnesota allowed just 25 sacks last year (but only Ohio State attempted fewer passes among Big Ten teams).

Brothers Ed and Tommy Olson have bright futures on the left side of the line, and the return of tackle Jimmy Gjere from injury gives the group promise. Gjere started the first five games of last season before missing the rest of the season because of a concussion.

DEFENSE

Defensive coordinator Tracy Claeys is hoping that trading size for speed will improve a unit that finished 10th in the Big Ten in total defense.

The Gophers are going with a smaller-but-quicker philosophy, particularly at defensive end, linebacker and safety.

For example: Other than 6-6, 300-pound Ra'Shede Hageman — who is expected to anchor the line at defensive tackle — the Gophers are going small.

Defensive ends Ben Perry and Michael Amaefula got significant playing time as freshmen, helping the Gophers

Marcus Jones
Photo by Jesse Johnson-US PRESSWIRE

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	MarQueis Gray*	Sr.	Athletic leader needs to show passing improvement.	Max Shortell, So.
TB	James Gillum	Jr.	JC transfer brings grind-it-out ability that fits Big Ten.	Donnell Kirkwood, So.
WR	Brandon Green*	Sr.	Only returning player with a TD reception.	Isaac Fruechte, So.
WR	Devin Crawford-Tufts	So.	Big-play ability, but has a lot to learn.	Andre McDonald, Fr.
SR	Marcus Jones	So.	Will he have same speed post-knee surgery?	Malcolm Moulton, Jr.
TE	John Rabe*	Sr.	Reliable blocker needs to take steps as a receiver.	Drew Goodger, So.
LT	Ed Olson*	Jr.	One of two juniors on OL; has 18 career starts.	Marek Lenkiewicz, So.
LG	Tommy Olson	So.	Ed's brother played in eight games as true frosh.	Caleb Bak, So.
C	Zach Mottla	Jr.	First-time starter will need to make a big jump.	Jon Christenson, Fr.
RG	Zac Epping*	So.	Started final eight games of freshman season.	Foster Bush, Fr.
RT	Jimmy Gjere	So.	Five-game starter in 2011 before suffering concussion.	Josh Campion, Fr.
K	Jordan Wettstein*	Sr.	6-for-6 on FGs after taking over position late in '11.	Chris Hawthorne, Jr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Michael Amaefula	So.	Speedy rusher needs to increase sack production.	D.L. Wilhite, Sr.*
DT	Ra'Shede Hageman	Jr.	Coaches believe TE convert can be a star.	Harold Legania, So.
DT	Cameron Botticelli	So.	Part-timer as a freshman becomes full-time starter.	Eric Jacques, Jr.
DE	Thieren Cockran	Fr.	Redshirt could emerge as team's top edge rusher.	Ben Perry, So.*
LB	Keanon Cooper*	Sr.	Steady player has big-play ability.	Spencer Reeves, Sr.
LB	Mike Rallis*	Sr.	Converted safety brings speed to heart of defense.	Jephte Matilus, Fr.
LB	James Manuel	Jr.	Another former safety improves team speed.	Lamonte Edwards, So.
CB	Michael Carter	Sr.	Up-and-down career may end on a high note.	Martez Shabazz, Jr.
CB	Troy Stoudermire	Sr.	Looks to make the most of extra year of eligibility.	Jeremy Baltazar, Jr.
SS	Brock Vereen*	Jr.	Recruited as a CB, has moved to safety.	Cedric Thompson, So.
FS	Derrick Wells	So.	Another cornerback who has moved to safety.	Grayson Levine, So.
P	Peter Mortell	Fr.	Will be given every chance to improve punting situation.	Dan Orseske, Jr.*

*Returning Starter

GOLDEN GOPHERS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Phillip Nelson
Nelson completed 67 percent of his passes as a senior and had a 43-9 touchdown-to-interception ratio. The 6-2, 225-pound prospect is cool in the pocket and is always in command of the huddle and his offense. He could end up being the director of Minnesota's offense for several seasons to come.

Andre McDonald
In McDonald, Minnesota is getting the big, outside receiver who can stretch the field and open up plays underneath. A big, physical player at 6-2, 200-pounds, McDonald caught 60 or more passes in each of his final two high school seasons and scored 38 touchdowns over that stretch.

Jamel Harbison
The beneficiary of McDonald opening up routes underneath the coverage and Nelson's high completion percentage could be Harbison, a 5-11, 195-pound receiver who runs clean routes and has the physical toughness to catch passes over the middle and pick up yards after the catch.

THE SLEEPER

Maxx Williams
Williams' father and uncle both played football for the Golden Gophers. His mother was a volleyball player at the University as well. The 6-4, 235-pound prospect certainly comes from an athletic background, and will be called upon to play tight end for the Golden Gophers.

Committments	27
Average Stars	2.70
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	19
★★☆☆☆	8
Total Stars	73
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 12

2013 NEEDS: Minnesota addressed its passing game in the 2012 class, signing two quarterbacks and four wide receivers. Now look for the Gophers to address the running game in the 2013 class and target players who can give future Minnesota offenses a balanced attack. On defense, head coach Jerry Kill and his staff will be focused on the front seven, where help is needed at the linebacker and defensive end positions.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Duke Anyanwu	ATH	6-4	230	★★★	Blaine, MN	Blaine
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Chose Minnesota over Air Force, North Dakota, Northern Iowa and South Dakota State.						
Jeremy Baltazar	DB	6-0	195	★★	Brenham, TX	Blinn C.C.
Recorded 33 tackles, 10 pass breakups and two interceptions in 2011…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Briean Boddy	DB	5-11	185	★★★	Coffeyville, KS	Coffeyville C.C.
Had 40 tackles, one tackle for loss, four interceptions and four pass breakups in 2011…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Scott Ekpe	DT	6-4	275	★★	Lewisville, TX	Lewisville
Recorded 24 tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss and 0.5 sacks as a senior…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Isaac Fruechte	WR	6-3	205	★★	Rochester, MN	Rochester C.C.
Recorded 30 receptions for 805 yards and nine touchdowns in 2010…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
James Gillum	RB	5-11	204	★★★	Perkinston, MS	Gulf Coast C.C.
Rushed for 1,042 yards with nine touchdowns in 2011 and 1,297 yards and 16 TDs in 2010…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Jamel Harbison	WR	5-11	195	★★★	Charlotte, NC	Mallard Creek
Rated as the No. 28 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com…Had more than 50 receptions with 21 touchdowns as a senior.						
Isaac Hayes	OL	6-2	275	★★★	Mendota Heights, MN	St. Thomas Academy
Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 39 offensive guard.						
Jordan Hinojosa	DT	6-3	275	★★★	Miami, FL	Miami Central
Participated in the Nike South Florida All-Star Game…Chose Minnesota over Michigan State, Wake Forest, West Virginia and Western Michigan.						
Antonio Johnson	DB	6-0	190	★★★	Cleveland, OH	Shaker Heights
Rated as the No. 53 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 43 safety.						
Roland Johnson	DT	6-1	295	★★★	El Dorado, KS	Butler County C.C.
Recorded 27 tackles, seven tackles for loss and three sacks in 2011…Played at Western Carolina in 2010.						
Alex Keith	DE	6-3	230	★★	Columbia, MO	Hickman
Earned first-team all-state and all-district honors in 2011…Had 67 tackles, 22 tackles for loss and 12.5 sacks as a senior.						
Ben Lauer	OL	6-6	265	★★	Plymouth, MN	Wayzata
All-state selection…Helped lead an offense that averaged 341.9 yards per game in 2011.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Mitch Leidner	QB	6-4	230	★★	Lakeville, MN	Lakeville South
Threw for 1,872 yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Jack Lynn	LB	6-3	210	★★★	Lake Zurich, IL	Lake Zurich
Rated as the No. 27 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com… Recorded 93 tackles, seven tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks as a senior.						
KJ Maye	ATH	5-10	190	★★★	Mobile, AL	Murphy
Passed for 1,122 yards and 13 touchdowns while rushing for 1,041 yards and eight scores as a senior.						
Andre McDonald	WR	6-2	200	★★★	Minnetonka, MN	Hopkins
Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 68 wide receiver…Caught 60 passes for 1,253 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior.						
Eric Murray	DB	6-0	178	★★	Milwaukee, WI	Riverside University
Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Wisconsin by Rivals.com…First-team all-state selection.						
Philip Nelson	QB	6-2	225	★★★	Mankato, MN	Mankato West
Enrolled at Minnesota in January...Rated No. 15 pro style suarerback nationally... Ranked No. 3 player in Minnesota...Gatorade State Player of the Year...Passed for 2,784 yards and 35 touchdowns, while running for 1,243 yards and 20 scores, as a senior.						
Jonah Pirsig	OL	6-9	295	★★★	Blue Earth, MN	Blue Earth Area Jr Sr
Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 15 pro-style quarterback.						
Lincoln Plsek	DE	6-4	245	★★★	Waco, TX	Reicher
Helped lead an offense that racked up 4,655 yards during the 2011 season…First-team all-state selection.						
Nick Rallis	DB	5-11	200	★★★	Edina, MN	Edina
Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Earned first-team all-state honors as a senior.						
Martez Shabazz	DB	5-11	165	★★★	Athens, TX	Trinity Valley C.C.
Switched his commitment from Baylor to Minnesota…Enrolled at Minnesota in January.						
Yoshoub Timms	DT	6-2	265	★★	Fort Walton Beach, FL	Fort Walton Beach
Had 27 tackles and one sack as a senior…Had 48 tackles and two sacks as a junior.						
Damarius Travis	DB	6-2	205	★★★	Pensacola, FL	Pensacola
Second-team all-state selection…Helped lead team to 9-3 record and district title as a senior.						
Maxx Williams	TE	6-4	235	★★★	Waconia, MN	Waconia
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Minnesota by Rivals.com…Participated in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl.						
Rodrick Williams Jr.	RB	5-11	228	★★★	Lewisville, TX	Lewisville
Rushed for 748 yards and four touchdowns as a senior…Rushed for 446 yards and four TDs as a junior.						

GOLDEN GOPHERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
12	Moses Alipate	TE	6-5	280	Jr.	Bloomington
98	Michael Amaefula	DE	6-2	245	So.	Arlington, TX
	Duke Anyanwu	ATH	6-4	230	Fr.	Blaine
64	Caleb Bak	OL	6-3	290	So.	Columbia Heights
22	Jeremy Baltazar	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Corona, CA
59	Joey Balthazor	LB	6-3	235	Jr.	Hartland, WI
31	Cole Banham	RB	5-9	177	So.	Lakeville
82	A.J. Barker	WR	6-1	197	Jr.	St. Paul
47	Quinn Bauducco	LB	6-3	225	Fr.	Moorpark, CA
1	Brendan Beal	LB	6-3	250	Jr.	Bangor, PA
47	Alex Bisch	TE	6-6	245	So.	Northfield
73	Joe Bjorklund	OL	6-5	295	Fr.	Rosemount
29	Briean Boddy	DB	5-11	185	So.	Wilmington, DE
46	Cameron Botticelli	DL	6-5	280	So.	Milwaukee, WI
42	Gavin Bronson	DL	6-4	245	Fr.	Burnsville
77	Foster Bush	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Menasha, WI
65	Josh Campion	OL	6-5	315	Fr.	Fergus Falls
6	Michael Carter	DB	5-11	185	Sr.	Pompano Beach, FL
17	C.J. Cesario	WR	5-10	185	So.	Arlington Heights, IL
63	Jon Christenson	OL	6-4	290	Fr.	Minnetonka
27	David Cobb	RB	5-11	220	So.	Killeen, TX
55	Thieren Cockran	DE	6-6	235	Fr.	Homestead, FL
4	Keanon Cooper	LB	6-0	220	Sr.	Dallas, TX
80	Devin Crawford-Tufts	WR	6-2	195	So.	Edina
89	Curran Delaney	DL	6-1	300	Sr.	Waconia
	Cedric Dicke	DB	6-3	200	Fr.	Cannon Falls
32	Lamonte Edwards	LB	6-2	210	So.	Woodbury
97	Scott Ekpe	DT	6-4	275	Fr.	Lewisville, TX
18	Derrick Engel	WR	6-2	180	Jr.	Chaska
52	Zac Epping	OL	6-2	310	So.	Kenosha, WI
70	Sean Ferguson	OL	6-6	300	So.	Philadelphia, PA
48	Jake Filkins	LS	6-2	240	Jr.	Prescott, WI
3	Dexter Foreman	QB	6-1	220	Fr.	Manvel, TX
14	Isaac Fruechte	WR	6-3	205	So.	Caledonia
49	Matt Garin	DE	6-4	250	Jr.	Apple Valley
21	James Gillum	RB	5-11	204	Jr.	Pearl River, LA
76	Jimmy Gjere	OL	6-7	325	So.	New Brighton
83	Drew Goodger	TE	6-5	255	So.	Shawnee Mission, KS
43	Ryan Grant	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Eden Prairie
5	MarQueis Gray	QB	6-4	245	Sr.	Indianapolis, IN
1	Brandon Green	WR	6-0	190	Sr.	Chicago, IL
91	Kendall Gregory-McGhee	TE	6-5	260	Jr.	Aurora, CO
99	Ra'Shede Hageman	DE	6-6	300	Jr.	Minneapolis
90	Austin Hahn	DL	6-4	270	Sr.	Hartford, WI
	Jamel Harbison	WR	5-11	195	Fr.	Charlotte, NC
44	JoJuan Harper	RB	5-10	195	Fr.	Columbia Heights
40	Jared Hartman	LS	6-3	235	Fr.	Falcon Heights
	Tyler Hartmann	DL	6-3	245	Fr.	Andover
36	Chris Hawthorne	K	6-6	200	Jr.	Raleigh, NC
	Isaac Hayes	OL	6-2	275	Fr.	Brooklyn Park
75	Ernie Heifort	OL	6-5	250	Fr.	Bemidji
30	Mike Henry	FB	6-1	240	Jr.	Mahtomedi
57	Aaron Hill	LB	6-2	225	Jr.	St. Charles, MO
	Jordan Hinojosa	DT	6-3	275	Fr.	Miami, FL
	Ben Holcomb	DB	6-4	200	Fr.	Germantown, WI
89	Logan Hutton	WR	6-1	180	So.	La Marque, TX
62	Eric Jacques	DL	6-2	290	Jr.	Pompano Beach, FL
	Antonio Johnson	DB	6-0	190	Fr.	Cleveland, OH
	Roland Johnson	DT	6-1	295	Jr.	Camden, SC
15	Marcus Jones	WR	5-8	170	So.	Wake Forest, NC
84	Victor Keise	WR	6-1	180	Jr.	Coral Springs, FL
	Alex Keith	DE	6-3	230	Fr.	Columbia, MO
20	Donnell Kirkwood	RB	5-10	216	So.	Delray Beach, FL
19	Matt Kloss	WR	6-0	200	Sr.	Coon Rapids
	Ben Lauer	OT	6-6	265	Fr.	Plymouth
94	Harold Legania	DL	6-4	300	So.	New Orleans, LA
7	Mitch Leidner	QB	6-4	230	Fr.	Lakeville
74	Marek Lenkiewicz	OL	6-5	275	So.	Tinley Park, IL
23	Grayson Levine	DB	5-11	195	So.	Eden Prairie
	Jack Lynn	LB	6-3	210	Fr.	Lake Zurich, IL
24	James Manuel	LB	6-2	215	Jr.	Indianapolis, IN
34	Jephte Matilus	LB	6-1	230	Fr.	Delray Beach, FL
	KJ Maye	ATH	5-10	190	Fr.	Mobile, AL
71	Kyle McAvoy	OL	6-5	305	Fr.	Bloomington, IL
66	Luke McAvoy	OL	6-5	285	Fr.	Bloomington, IL
	Andre McDonald	WR	6-2	200	Fr.	Minnetonka
	John McKelvey	ATH	6-0	190	Fr.	Hunting Valley, OH
39	Gabe Mezzenga	TE	6-4	240	So.	Shoreview
17	Dwayne Mitchell	LB	6-2	210	So.	New Orleans, LA
16	Steven Montgomery	DB	5-10	205	Fr.	Miramar, FL
37	Peter Mortell	P	6-2	200	Fr.	Green Bay, WI
62	Zach Mottla	OL	6-2	290	Jr.	Edina
86	Malcolm Moulton	WR	5-11	185	Jr.	Lawrenceville, GA
	Eric Murray	DB	6-0	178	Fr.	Milwaukee, WI
9	Philip Nelson	QB	6-2	225	Fr.	Mankato
87	Sahr Ngekia	TE	6-4	245	Jr.	Richfield
58	Ed Olson	OL	6-7	305	Jr.	Mahtomedi
53	Tommy Olson	OL	6-4	295	So.	Mahtomedi
41	Dan Orseske	P	6-3	205	Jr.	Chicago, IL
48	Judd Paffrath	LB	6-2	245	Jr.	Alexandria
93	Ben Perry	DE	6-5	245	So.	Southlake, TX
	Jonah Pirsig	OT	6-9	295	Fr.	Blue Earth
	Lincoln Plsek	ATH	6-4	245	Fr.	Waco, TX
81	John Rabe	TE	6-4	255	Sr.	Iowa Falls, IA
26	Mike Rallis	LB	6-2	245	Sr.	Edina
	Nick Rallis	LB	5-11	220	Fr.	Edina
96	Dave Ramlet	LS	6-2	240	So.	Appleton, WI
8	Spencer Reeves	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Dallas, TX
35	Dominic Schultz	LB	6-1	215	Fr.	Port Huron, MI
38	David Schwerman	K	6-0	195	Sr.	Kettle Moraine, WI
3	Martez Shabazz	DB	5-11	165	Jr.	DeSoto, TX
11	Max Shortell	QB	6-6	235	So.	Shawnee Mission, KS
67	David Stommes	DL	6-4	245	Jr.	Eden Valley
11	Troy Stoudermire	DB	5-10	200	Sr.	Dallas, TX
27	Cedric Thompson	DB	5-10	205	So.	Calipatria, CA
	Yoshoub Timms	DT	6-2	265	Fr.	Fort Walton Beach, FL
40	Nathan Tow-Arnett	DB	6-1	205	Sr.	Redwood Falls
	Damarius Travis	DB	6-2	205	Fr.	Pensacola, FL
21	Brock Vereen	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Valencia, CA
28	Kenny Watkins	DB	6-0	200	Jr.	Detroit, MI
13	Derrick Wells	DB	6-0	205	So.	Lehigh Acres, FL
18	Peter Westerhaus	LB	6-3	230	Fr.	Chanhassen
39	Jordan Wettstein	K	5-11	185	Sr.	De Pere, WI
95	D.L. Wilhite	DE	6-3	250	Sr.	Lexington, KY
	Maxx Williams	TE	6-4	235	Fr.	Waconia
	Rodrick Williams	RB	5-11	228	Fr.	Lewisville, TX
8	Cameron Wilson	WR	6-3	210	So.	Rockwall, TX
25	Devon Wright	RB	6-0	195	So.	Coral Springs, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Gray	11	114.5	108	213	8	50.7	1495	8	64	135.9
M. Shortell	8	101.0	26	54	2	48.1	309	2	33	38.6

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. McKnight	12	51	760	14.9	4	64	63.3
C. McGarry	12	16	120	7.5	2	20	10.0
B. Green	12	15	190	12.7	1	33	15.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Gray	11	199	1090	124	966	4.9	6	37	87.8
D. Bennett	12	166	659	20	639	3.8	3	25	53.2
Kirkwood	12	63	243	14	229	3.6	3	30	19.1

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: K. Royston 123, G. Tinsley 87, M. Rallis 83
Tackles for loss: G. Tinsley 9, K. Cooper 6, A. Jacobs 6
Sacks: G. Tinsley 4, D.L. Wilhite 3, two tied with 2
Interceptions: Stoudermire 2, K. Royston 1, B. Vereen 1

NOTEBOOK

Every year football coaches and players talk about how difficult it is losing players. Never has that pain been more real than at Minnesota.

The Gophers knew they'd be without graduated linebacker **Gary Tinsley** in the 2012 season. But when Tinsley was found dead in his room in April, it was a literal loss that was felt throughout the campus.

Tinsley — whom authorities said died of an enlarged heart — was found by his friend and roommate **Keanon Cooper**, who has dedicated his senior season to Tinsley.

"I was probably one of the guys who was hurting the most," Cooper said. "But I've been trying to stay strong for the people around me — for my teammates and the coaching staff, people close to GT, his family."

Tinsley, who was set to become the first member of his family to graduate from college, was awarded his degree posthumously.

"The thing that we'll always remember is that million-dollar smile," Gophers coach **Jerry Kill** said. "In his game day (mode), and he's got 51 down those cheeks and he's coming out of that tunnel ... the guy just had what you'd call 'It.' There's no definition in the dictionary for it; he had it."

• Talk about responsibility. Quarterback **MarQueis Gray** has to lead a Big Ten offense, go to school ... and help raise twin sons MarShawn and MarZell. The two were born right before he faced Wisconsin last November. So how does he do it? "I get them to sleep, then I sleep, too," he said.

• The Gophers hope **Marcus Jones** is true to his pledge to be back 100 percent from knee ligament surgery. He showed big-time speed as a true freshman before being injured in October. The Gophers were careful with him during spring practice, but expect him to be full-go this fall. They need him. The Gophers have just one receiver with a touchdown reception on his college resume.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"The most improved team from spring of 2011 to spring of 2012. Jerry Kill has a system that is tested and proven, and it has taken him a year to put it in. His style is drastically different from Tim Brewster's. So, it's taken him a year. They still need to build their personnel quality and depth, but I came away from spring practice thinking this is a team that could be bowl eligible.

"Defensively, they have some ways to go, but the advantage is that defensive coordinator Tracy Claeys has been with Jerry for a long time. They know what they want to do. It's just a matter of implementing their system and recruiting to it."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Brock Vereen
Photo by Steve Beyer

go from an awful nine sacks in 2010 to 19 last season. Those two, plus the addition of freshman Thieren Cockran, should continue that progress on the edge. As for Hageman on the inside, "When he's at his best, he can't be blocked," Kill said.

Two former safeties (Mike Rallis and James Manuel) are now playing linebacker. Rallis made 83 tackles last season, tops among returning players. Two former cornerbacks are playing safety.

All of this is designed to produce more big plays. In 2011, the Gophers had too few sacks, were 12th in the conference in interceptions (four) and its nine turnovers gained were seven fewer than the next-worst Big Ten team. All that helped lead to a lot of long drives by opponents.

Will that change?

"The fans have heard it for a lot of years, that this year is going to be different," said Rallis, who began his college career at safety before moving to outside linebacker last year. This year, he will be the middle linebacker.

"There's not too much I can say to them other than, come season time, we'll be ready to go."

If they are, it will be because of their speed.

Rallis will have to prove that he can handle interior blockers. Manuel will have to show he can cover slot receivers and quick tight ends.

Cornerback Troy Stoudermire, who got a fifth year of eligibility after an injury last season, will anchor the secondary. He had 24 tackles, including three for loss, and two interceptions in four games in 2011.

At the other cornerback spot, senior Michael Carter hopes he has finally put inconsistency behind him. Safeties Brock Vereen and Derrick Wells, both former corners, will be charged with producing more pickoffs.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Troy Stoudermire returns as the Big Ten's career kickoff-return leader. Marcus Jones' speed should shine on punt returns. So the Gophers are confident in their return game.

Not so much when it comes to kickers.

Dan Orseske finished 11th in the Big Ten in consecutive seasons in punting, averaging 37.0 yards per attempt last season. That's why it appears walk-on

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB MarQueis Gray

Any steps the team makes this season will depend on Gray, who has the talent to play on Sunday but has yet to prove it regularly on Saturday. ... Skilled runner spent the offseason working on his passing technique and on reading defenses. ... Five of his eight TD passes in 2011 came in final five games. ... Is a career 49.2 percent passer, a number that needs to improve. ... Had a career-high 295 passing yards vs. Michigan State last season.

EMERGING STAR

DT Ra'Shede Hageman

Minneapolis native was recruited as a tight end, spent some time at DE, but now has found a home anchoring the middle of the defensive line. Hageman is talented, with size (6-6, 300), and the coaches believe he could emerge as a star this season. ... With the defense emphasizing speed over size, Hageman's ability to disrupt the middle of the offensive line will be crucial. ... An up-and-down performer, Hageman had 13 tackles with two sacks in 12 games in 2011.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB James Gillum

Junior college transfer could fill void at running back for the Gophers, who have been looking for a go-to back since coach Jerry Kill arrived. He joins a backfield plagued with injury problems, which will create an opportunity for Gillum. ... Gained 2,339 yards in two seasons at Mississippi Gulf Coast. ... Averaged 4.6 yards per rush and scored nine times in 2011.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	20.9	100
Rushing	99.5	111
Passing	207.0	75
Total	306.4	109
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.8	51
Rushing	151.7	69
Passing	217.5	55
Total	369.2	63
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.08	68

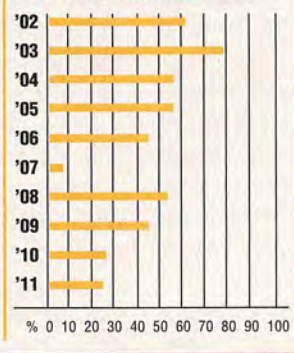
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	23.2	89
Rushing	135.3	86
Passing	226.1	57
Total	361.3	77
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	33.0	98
Rushing	191.4	98
Passing	200.8	33
Total	392.2	76
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 2	+ 0.17	45

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	18.4	111
Rushing	160.0	56
Passing	150.3	109
Total	310.3	110
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	31.7	93
Rushing	186.4	91
Pass	216.7	49
Total	403.1	77
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 8	- 0.67	100

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
3-9, 2-6

L	at USC	17-19
L	NEW MEXICO STATE	21-28
W	MIAMI (OH)	29-23
L	NORTH DAKOTA STATE	24-37
L	at Michigan	0-58
L	at Purdue	17-45
L	NEBRASKA	14-41
W	IOWA	22-21
L	at Michigan State	24-31
L	WISCONSIN	13-42
L	at Northwestern	13-28
W	ILLINOIS	27-7

PLAYER PROFILE

MarQueis Gray
Photo by Scott Boehm

Matured QB Gray Own Worst Critic

Listen to this scouting report on Gophers quarterback MarQueis Gray: Too many open receivers missed. Misreads. Turnovers. Player needs to take a big jump.

Guess who compiled this?

Gray himself. Gray, whose athletic ability has never been questioned, whose toughness has been proven again and again, whose leadership has become obvious, knows his play needs to take a big jump if the Gophers' fortunes are to improve.

"When I look at the footage from last year from start to finish, I'm like, 'Oh, my god, I was horrible,'" Gray said this spring. "I see why everyone was second-guessing me. ... That's not what I'm capable of."

So what is he capable of? Everyone knows he can run with the ball; his nearly 1,000 rushing yards last season prove that. But even last year, as the season wore on, there were signs of improvement. Take the team's 27-7 season-ending win over Illinois as an example, when Gray ran for two touchdowns and threw for a third.

Ever since that day, Gray has worked on improving his QB skills. He has thrown thousands of passes, working on getting a quicker and smoother release. Too often last season he looked hesitant, babying the ball to a receiver. This season, he appears to have more confidence, powering the ball in. His technique has improved, as has his spiral, which is tighter.

"You can see he's thrown the ball a lot," coach Jerry Kill said. "He's been on target most of the time, setting his feet (correctly). We blitzed him, and he's been able to know where to go with the ball. You can tell he's much more comfortable about what he's doing than a year before."

That is understandable. Recruited as a spread option quarterback, Gray was eventually moved to wide receiver by former coach Tim Brewster. So it's no surprise that, when returned to quarterback last season, Gray didn't always look polished.

And he had a tough start to his 2011 season. He had just three touchdown passes in the season's first seven games. He eventually had to surrender his starting role for two games due to injury.

"But, as the season went on, I got better," Gray said. "I felt, 'Wow, OK, I can do this.'"

That confidence had carried over to this year, which the 22-year-old feels will be a breakthrough season. It has to be. He has twin sons at home depending on him. Gray has grown up, both on the field and off. It's time for the on-field results to show that.

Peter Mortell will take over that job.

Kicking is also a question, if only because Jordan Wettstein appeared in just six games last season. But he did emerge as a junior, going 6 of 6 on field-goal attempts over the Gophers' final six games, including a 51-yarder in a season-ending victory over Illinois.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The key to an improved season rests in the ability to win the "gimme" games — the non-conference contests against winnable opponents that have proven so difficult for the Gophers the past two seasons.

This season, a quick start could mean the Gophers are a couple of Big Ten wins away from bowl eligibility, as the four non-conference games are all winnable. The Gophers open at UNLV, which won only two games last season. Then there are three home games — against FCS opponent New Hampshire, a Western Michigan team that was 0-3 vs. the Big Ten last season, and a Syracuse team coming off a 4-7 season.

The Gophers open the conference schedule at Iowa — a team Minnesota has beaten in consecutive seasons — followed by a home game against Northwestern. Hence, a quick start is possible for the Gophers, who don't have to play Ohio State, Penn State and Indiana in their cross-over division games.

— Kent Youngblood

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Aug. 30	at UNLV	2-10
Sept. 8	NEW HAMPSHIRE	8-4
Sept. 15	WESTERN MICHIGAN	7-6
Sept. 22	SYRACUSE	5-7
Sept. 29	at Iowa	7-6
Oct. 13	NORTHWESTERN	6-7
Oct. 20	at Wisconsin	11-3
Oct. 27	PURDUE	7-6
Nov. 3	MICHIGAN	11-2
Nov. 10	at Illinois	7-6
Nov. 17	at Nebraska	9-4
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN STATE	11-3

EASTERN MICHIGAN | EAGLES

MAC rank: 11 **Record: 6-6** **MAC record: 4-4 (T-4th, West)** **Stadium: Rynearson Stadium (30,200)**

By Bob Narang

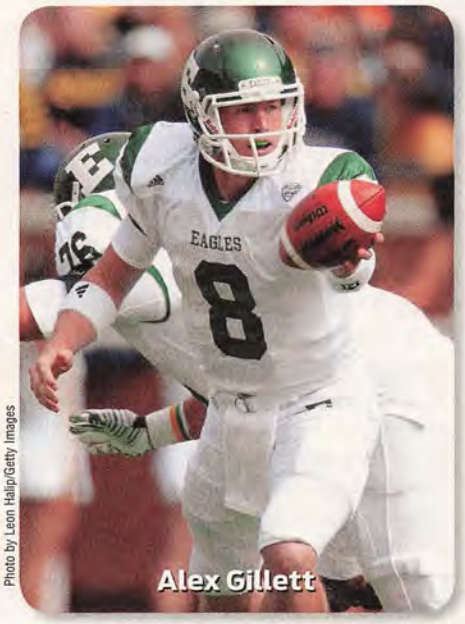


Photo by Leon Halip/Getty Images

Alex Gillett

"Alex has really matured as a senior. He just has to carry it over to the fall."
— Coach Ron English, on QB Alex Gillett

EAGLES at a GLANCE

COACH: Ron English — At EMU and overall: 8-28, 3 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ken Karcher
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Phil Snow

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1987
LAST BOWL: 1987, California Bowl
RETURNING STARTERS: 14; 8 offense, 4 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Alex Gillett, TE Garrett Hoskins, C Andrew Sorgatz, LB Justin Cudworth, CB Marlon Pollard, CB Marcell Rose

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The Eagles have a potent running game with most of last year's key rushers back and an intact offensive line. That's a good sign for a program looking to post a winning season for the first time since 1995. Gillett worked on developing a balance between the run and pass in the spring, emphasizing improvement with his footwork and accuracy.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: It's never a good thing when a three-year starting quarterback must battle for his starting position in the spring. Gillett's ability to become a two-dimensional quarterback by passing more is paramount to the offense's success. Inexperience at safety is a big concern, and the defensive line remains a work in progress.

OFFENSE

Senior quarterback Alex Gillett entered the spring with his job in jeopardy.

Eastern Michigan coach Ron English wanted to motivate Gillett by sending him a message that he needed to show marked improvement. Gillett, a three-year starter, worked on his footwork and accuracy and welcomed the new emphasis on passing the ball more this season.

Gillett, who led the Eagles in rushing with 736 yards last year, left the spring with his starting job intact after showing better chemistry with his wide receivers.

The Eagles, the 14th-best rushing attack in the nation in 2011, seek a balanced offense despite returning six of last year's top seven rushers. Javonti Greene, Dominique Sherrer and Ryan Brumfield get the opportunity to run behind an experienced line with all five starters back, plus senior tight end Garrett Hoskins.

Wide receivers Nick Olds and Demarius Reed welcome the opportunity for more balls thrown in their direction in the more-balanced offense. Look for incoming freshman receiver Quincy Jones to be an immediate factor in the passing game.

DEFENSE

The defense played a key role in EMU's improvement from winning two games in two years to recording six wins last year. The Eagles have to combat significant losses at key areas, especially along the defensive line and safety spots.

Defensive end Andy Mulumba had 7.5 tackles for loss in 2011, but he must adjust to an entire new group of linemen surrounding him.

The spring session showed EMU's weaknesses on defense with English commenting that "the defensive line is coming along, the linebackers are decent, and the safety position ... we have a long way to go."

That won't cut it in the offensive-oriented Mid-American Conference.

Linebackers Justin Cudworth and Blake Poole should get plenty of chances to rack up tackles. UCLA transfer Marlon Pollard and Marcell Rose are solid cornerbacks, but they will be hampered by the youth at the safety positions.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore kick returner Tyler Allen captivated the coaching staff in the spring with his speed and change-of-direction while maintaining a downhill style of attack. Punter Jay Karutz averaged 38.8 yards per punt and didn't have one blocked last year. Kicker Kody Fulkerson struggled with accuracy past 30 yards last year.

OVERVIEW

The Eagles have to deal with the pressure of expectations for the first time since 1995. Optimism is high following EMU's 6-6 record last season and the return of a veteran offensive crew, although Eastern Michigan's six wins were somewhat deceiving, with two coming against FCS teams and their four league victories by only a combined 32 points.

The Eagles have to overcome a rugged schedule that features three of their first four games on the road, including at Purdue and Michigan State on consecutive weekends. The Eagles believe they can contend for the MAC West title, but the defensive front four and safety positions are flimsy.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Quincy Jones: The Eagles lack playmakers at receiver. Enter Jones. A three-star recruit, Jones (6-3, 195) has quality size and possesses sprinter's speed. Jones is a rare high-level offensive recruit to sign with the Eagles.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**8**	**Alex Gillett***	**6-1**	**218**	**Sr.**
RB	25	Dominique Sherrer	5-9	203	Sr.
WR	15	Julius Shelby	6-4	202	So.
WR	**80**	**Nick Olds***	**6-2**	**203**	**Jr.**
WR	2	Demarius Reed	5-10	167	So.
TE	**85**	**Garrett Hoskins***	**6-2**	**253**	**Sr.**
LT	**68**	**Korey Neal***	**6-3**	**316**	**Sr.**
LG	**70**	**Corey Watman***	**6-2**	**290**	**Sr.**
C	**72**	**Andrew Sorgatz***	**6-5**	**286**	**Sr.**
RG	**67**	**Campbell Allison***	**6-6**	**324**	**So.**
RT	**77**	**Lincoln Hansen***	**6-6**	**300**	**So.**
DEFENSE					
DE	59	Matt Price	6-2	256	Jr.
NT	93	Cy Maughmer	6-2	299	So.
DT	94	Devin Henderson	6-2	319	Sr.
DE	**56**	**Andy Mulumba***	**6-4**	**262**	**Sr.**
LB	**47**	**Justin Cudworth***	**5-11**	**220**	**Sr.**
LB	35	Colin Weingrad	6-0	213	Jr.
LB	21	Bryan Pali	6-0	209	Sr.
CB	**4**	**Marlon Pollard***	**6-0**	**173**	**Jr.**
CB	**31**	**Marcell Rose***	**5-9**	**185**	**Sr.**
SS	7	Sean Cotton	6-1	214	So.
FS	20	Kevin Johnson	5-11	193	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**34**	**Kody Fulkerson***	**5-11**	**185**	**Jr.**
P	**37**	**Jay Karutz***	**6-2**	**205**	**Sr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2012 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	at Ball State
Sept. 8	ILLINOIS STATE
Sept. 15	at Purdue
Sept. 22	at Michigan State
Oct. 6	KENT STATE
Oct. 13	TOLEDO
Oct. 20	ARMY
Oct. 27	at Bowling Green
Nov. 1	at Ohio
Nov. 10	CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Nov. 17	at Western Michigan
Nov. 23	NORTHERN ILLINOIS

2011 RESULTS

W	HOWARD	41-9
W	ALABAMA STATE	14-7
L	at Michigan	3-31
L	at Penn State	6-34
W	AKRON	31-23
L	at Toledo	16-54
W	at Central Michigan	35-28
W	WESTERN MICHIGAN	14-10
L	BALL STATE	31-33
W	BUFFALO	30-17
L	at Kent State	22-28
L	at Northern Illinois	12-18

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	21.3	104
Rushing	218.3	14
Passing	126.7	117
Total	345.0	93
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.3	50
Rushing	140.5	49
Passing	209.8	41
Total	350.3	34
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-5	-0.42	91

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

For more coverage of the Cornhuskers, visit nebraska.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tim Beck | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Papuchis** | **STADIUM: Memorial: 73,918**

AT A GLANCE

2011: 9-4, 5-3 Big Ten (3rd, Legends)

COACH:
Bo Pelini — At Nebraska and overall: 39-16, 4 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
16; 7 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Taylor Martinez, RB Rex Burkhead, WR Kenny Bell, WR Quincy Enunwa, DT Baker Steinkuhler, LB Will Compton, SS Daimion Stafford, K/P Brett Maher

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Huskers should be an effective running team, with Burkhead and Ameer Abdullah operating behind a talented offensive line. Martinez is a three-year starter at quarterback and the receiving corps is deep. Defense has plenty of experience returning.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The defense loses its three best players; LB Lavonte David, in particular, will be sorely missed. The Huskers need to shore up an inconsistent pass rush and sort out roles in the secondary. The offensive line needs three new starters in addition to developing depth.

KEY LOSSES:
C Mike Caputo, OT Yoshi Hardick, DT Jared Crick, LB Lavonte David, CB Alfonzo Dennard

OVERVIEW:
Pelini has the program on solid ground, but the Huskers have been unable to make the step from good to great in his first four seasons. The offense appears capable of creating plenty of headaches for opponents, but the key to improvement could be whether the defense sheds its inconsistency of a season ago.

Steady Huskers Look For BCS Bowl Breakthrough

Nebraska has reached a point in its development under Bo Pelini where being good is no longer good enough.

The Huskers have not won fewer than nine games in any of Pelini's four seasons as head coach. His 39 wins are 12 more than his predecessor, Bill Callahan, achieved in four seasons and two more than his boss, athletic director Tom Osborne, had in the first four seasons of his legendary coaching career.

But Nebraska has not won a conference championship under Pelini, nor has it played in a BCS bowl game. The Huskers have continued to slip in terms of national relevancy, which doesn't sit well with their passionate, and sometimes spoiled, fan base.

"We're sick of being a good team," I-back Rex Burkhead said.

Pelini came into spring practice trumpeting the same message in slightly different terms. The Huskers want to make the jump from good to great, he said, but it can only come if everyone in the program is committed to taking care of the details.

"My whole theme of this offseason has been accountability and raising our level of accountability to a level it hasn't been to yet," Pelini said. "Does that mean it has been bad? No. But I'm looking at taking it to another level.

"That pertains to a lot of areas when you talk about football. You're talking about accountability, which leads to mental toughness, which leads to attention to detail, which leads to ultimately becoming a better football team."

Pelini emerged from the spring's 14 workouts — the Huskers' spring game was canceled by inclement weather — pleased with his players' progress, saying he liked the "character" of this team.

"We'll see how it plays out," he said. "I'm not big into making predictions, but we have the opportunity. It's going to come down to our level of commitment."

Whether Nebraska has the level of talent to compete — not only with the nation's elite but with the best teams in the Big Ten — will be determined in the fall. The early forecasts generally have the Huskers destined for a season like they had last season. Good, not great.

Still, Pelini is encouraged.

"I think we've built up some momentum," he said.

OFFENSE

The pieces appear to be in place for Nebraska to make a step forward on offense.

The Huskers return seven full-time starters and four other players with starting experience. I-back Rex Burkhead headlines what could be a formidable ground attack. There is more talent at the receiver positions. The offensive line is deeper than it has been in years.

To top it off, Nebraska returns a junior quarterback in Taylor Martinez, set to begin his third season as a starter. That generally would provide a level of comfort, considering he threw for the sixth-most yards (2,089) in a single season in school history.

Yet, Martinez has been a polarizing figure for a fan base hungry for championships. Some critics discount his ability to lead. Others find fault with his often unorthodox throwing motion.

Martinez spent extra time during in the spring trying to iron out some of the kinks in that motion. When the Huskers had a week off after their first three spring practices, Martinez worked with California-based quarterbacks instructor Steve Calhoun. His past pupils include Cam Newton and Jake Locker.

Pelini said Martinez was "very sharp" during the team's spring scrimmages. The quarterback planned to keep work-

Taylor Martinez
Photo by John Williamson

ing with Calhoun in the spring, as well as offensive coordinator Tim Beck, on improving his footwork.

Martinez should make strides in his second year under Beck, but many observers are taking a wait-and-see approach.

The Huskers figure to rely heavily on Burkhead and a stable of impressive young running backs. Burkhead carried the football on 73 percent of Nebraska's rushing attempts in 2011, but his workload could be reduced as Beck is committed to getting more carries for sophomore Ameer Abdullah.

The unexpected departure of Aaron Green also could open up carries for Mike Marrow, a 6-2, 250-pound junior who will get a chance to excel in short-yardage situations, and incoming freshman Imani Cross.

Kenny Bell, Quincy Enunwa, Tim Marlowe and Jamal Turner will give Martinez an experienced group of wide receivers, and Ben Cotton and Kyler Reed will provide the Huskers with one of the best tight end tandems in the country. Redshirt freshman Taariq Allen and true freshman Jordan Westerkamp also should figure into the mix.

Nebraska must replace three starters on the line, but a group headlined by second-team All-Big Ten performer Spencer Long should be capable of playing at a high level.

Seung Hoon Choi is a returning part-time starter at guard. Tackles Andrew Rodriguez and Tyler Moore have starting experience, while much is expected from Brett Qvale, Jeremiah Sirles, Cole Pensick and Justin Jackson.

"We have a lot of options across the offensive line," Pelini said. "There are some numbers and depth and tremendous competition."

DEFENSE

Pelini hangs his hat on his ability to mold top-flight defenses. The Huskers fell short of achieving that level last season, finishing 37th nationally in total defense, 42nd in scoring defense, 34th in pass efficiency defense and 64th in rushing defense.

The Huskers return seven starters from that unit, but will be without their three biggest playmakers — linebacker Lavonte David, cornerback Alfonzo Dennard and defensive tackle Jared Crick. All three heard their names called in the NFL Draft, with David going in the second round, Crick in the fourth and Dennard in the seventh.

Crick started last season as a possible first-rounder but missed half the season with a torn pectoral muscle. Dennard's stock dropped dramatically after an off-the-field incident a week before the draft.

"Any year at a place like this," Pelini said, "you're going to lose good players."

Pelini, though, has some good ones left.

Kenny Bell
Photo by Dennis Hubbard

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Taylor Martinez*	Jr.	Passed for 2,089 yards in 2011, sixth-best in school history.	Brion Carnes, So.
RB	Rex Burkhead*	Sr.	All-Big Ten performer is a dependable workhorse.	Ameer Abdullah, So.
FB	C.J. Zimmerer	Jr.	Most of his action has come on special teams.	Mike Marrow, Jr.
WR	Kenny Bell*	So.	Second-most productive freshman WR in program history.	Tim Marlowe, Sr.
WR	Quincy Enunwa*	Jr.	Devastating blocker on the perimeter; caught 21 passes.	Jamal Turner, So.
TE	Ben Cotton*	Sr.	Started 11 games before missing final two with injury.	Kyler Reed, Sr.
LT	Tyler Moore	So.	First true freshman OL to start opening game.	Brent Qvale, Jr.
LG	Seung Hoon Choi	Sr.	Walk-on emerged as a part-time starter as a junior.	Mike Moudy, So.
C	Cole Pensick	Jr.	Big shoes to fill, taking over for rugged Mike Caputo.	Justin Jackson, Sr.
RG	Spencer Long*	Jr.	Second-team All-Big Ten pick started every game last season.	Ryne Reeves, Fr.
RT	Jeremiah Sirles	Jr.	Starter as redshirt freshman in '10; was backup last season.	Andrew Rodriguez, Jr.*
K	Brett Maher*	Sr.	Converted 19 of 23 FGs in earning All-Big Ten honors.	Mauro Bondi, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Cameron Meredith*	Sr.	Versatile lineman has started past 27 games.	Joseph Carter, Sr.
DT	Baker Steinkuhler*	Sr.	Rugged performer; 40 tackles and two sacks last season.	Kevin Williams, Fr.
DT	Chase Rome	So.	Took advantage of injuries to log extensive time in 2011.	Thad Randle, Jr.
DE	Jason Ankrah*	Jr.	Started nine games as sophomore, recorded 17 tackles.	Eric Martin, Sr.
LB	Alonzo Whaley	Sr.	Tall task in taking over for tackle machine Lavonte David.	David Santos, Fr.
LB	Will Compton*	Sr.	Has developed into solid starter and team leader.	Trevor Roach, So.
LB	Sean Fisher	Sr.	Finally back to health after grisly 2010 leg injury.	Max Pirman, Fr.
CB	Andrew Green*	Jr.	Recorded 48 tackles to go along with one interception.	Mohammed Seisay, Jr.
CB	Antonio Bell	Sr.	Converted wide receiver is still learning the position.	Ciante Evans, Jr.*
SS	Daimion Stafford*	Sr.	Big hitter logged 80 tackles in his first year in program.	Courtney Osborne, Sr.
FS	P.J. Smith	Sr.	Can play either safety spot; excels on special teams.	Corey Cooper, So.
P	Brett Maher*	Sr.	Averaged 44.5 yards per punt in earning all-league honors.	Mauro Bondi, So.

*Returning Starter

HUSKERS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Mohammed Seisay
Nebraska needed an instant impact player in their defensive backfield out of the 2012 class, and they got it in the 6-2, 200-pound Seisay, the nation's No. 8-ranked junior college player. Seisay could play cornerback or safety and was a January enrollee who took part in the Cornhusker's spring practices.

Michael Rose
There was arguably no bigger need for the Cornhuskers in the 2012 class than linebacker, and they addressed that need well with four additions. Rose is a 6-0, 230-pound inside 'backer who is stout against the run and shows the instincts and toughness to step on the field early in his career.

Jordan Westerkamp
The 6-1, 195-pound Westerkamp had a record-setting high school career, and those numbers should translate to the college game. Westerkamp is a sure-handed receiver and precise route runner who is deceptively fast. He can stretch the field or be a possession receiver in the short and intermediate passing game.

THE SLEEPER

LeRoy Alexander
After transferring high schools before the start of his senior season, 6-2, 190-pound athlete LeRoy Alexander flew under the radar until late in the process when Nebraska came through with an offer. He could contribute immediately on special teams and also has the ability to play wide receiver or defensive back.

Committments	17
Average Stars	3.35
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	6
★★★☆☆	11
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	57
National Rank: 25	Big Ten: 3

2013 NEEDS: After having a small number of scholarships available to use in the 2012 class, Nebraska should be able to bounce back and sign a full class of 25 or more prospects in 2013. One of the biggest needs is tight end, where two are set to graduate following the 2012 season. The Cornhuskers also have to address depth in their defensive backfield, especially at the safety position, where they will lose three players with starting experience following next season.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jared Afalava	LB	6-3	215	★★★	South Jordan, UT	Bingham

Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Utah by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 50 outside linebacker…Recorded 87 tackles, two sacks and three interceptions as a senior.

LeRoy Alexander	ATH	6-2	190	★★★	Toledo, OH	Whitmer

Rated as the nation's No. 60 athlete by Rivals.com…Rushed for 665 yards and eight touchdowns on offense and recorded 43 tackles, three tackles for loss, seven pass breakups and two interceptions on defense as a senior.

Zaire Anderson	LB	6-1	220	★★★★	Riverside, CA	Riverside C.C.

Rated as the nation's No. 13 junior college prospect by Rivals.com…Had 95 tackles, 17 tackles for loss, seven sacks and two pass breakups in 2011… Had 92 tackles, 17 tackles for loss and nine sacks in 2010.

Tommy Armstrong	QB	6-2	210	★★★	Cibolo, TX	Steele

Rated as the No. 49 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 9 dual-threat quarterback…Passed for 1,945 yards and 29 touchdowns and rushed for 1,281 yards and 16 scores as a senior.

Thomas Brown	LB	6-2	210	★★★	Gardena, CA	Junipero Serra

Rated as the No. 73 prospect in California by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 31 inside linebacker…Chose Nebraska over Arizona State, Colorado, San Jose State, SMU and Utah.

Sam Cotton	TE	6-4	240	★★★	Lincoln, NE	Southeast

Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Nebraska by Rivals.com…Had 27 receptions for 300 yards and seven touchdowns in 2011…Chose Nebraska over Ohio and Tulsa.

Imani Cross	RB	6-1	220	★★★	Gainesville, GA	North Hall

Rated as the No. 47 prospect in Georgia by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 25 running back…Also recruited by East Carolina, Georgia Tech, Kentucky, Maryland, South Carolina, Tennessee, UCF, Vanderbilt and Virginia.

Aaron Curry	DT	6-3	275	★★★	Keller, TX	Fossil Ridge

Rated as the nation's No. 43 defensive tackle by Rivals.com…Recorded 59 tackles and three sacks as a senior…Had 68 tackles and four sacks as a junior…Chose Nebraska over Boise State, Iowa, Missouri, TCU and others.

Greg McMullen	DE	6-5	255	★★★★	Akron, OH	Hoban

Rivals250 selection…Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Ohio…Rated as the nation's No. 12 strongside defensive end…Had 78 tackles, 14 tackles for loss and 10 sacks as a senior.

Alonzo Moore	ATH	6-2	170	★★★★	Winnfield, LA	Winnfield Senior

Rated as the No. 9 prospect in Louisiana by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 22 athlete…Chose Nebraska over Louisiana Tech, Memphis, Minnesota, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and Texas A&M.

Avery Moss	DE	6-4	245	★★★	Tempe, AZ	Corona Del Sol

Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Arizona by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 33 strongside defensive end…Chose Nebraska over Arizona, Arizona State, Boise State, Purdue, San Diego State, Stanford, Washington and Washington State.

Michael Rose	LB	6-0	230	★★★	Kansas City, MO	Rockhurst

Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Missouri by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 15 inside linebacker…Had 104 tackles, three sacks, one interception and four pass breakups as a senior…Had 95 tackles, two sacks and one interception as a junior.

Mohammed Seisay	DB	6-2	200	★★★★	Thatcher, AZ	Eastern Arizona J.C.

Rated as the nation's No. 8 junior college prospect by Rivals.com…Enrolled at Nebraska in January.

Paul Thurston	OL	6-5	275	★★★★	Arvada, CO	Arvada West

Rivals250 selection…Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Colorado…Rated as the nation's No. 14 offensive tackle.

Vincent Valentine	DT	6-3	300	★★★	Edwardsville, IL	Edwardsville

Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 28 defensive tackle…Recorded 35 tackles, 11 tackles for loss, three sacks and one interception as a senior.

Jordan Westerkamp	WR	6-1	195	★★★★	Lombard, IL	Montini

Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 43 wide receiver…Had 91 receptions for 1,659 yards and 29 touchdowns as a senior.

Corey Whitaker	OL	6-5	270	★★★	Murrieta, CA	Vista Murrieta

Two-time all-league selection…Chose Nebraska over Fresno State, Idaho, Nevada, San Diego State and San Jose State.

CORNHUSKERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
8	Ameer Abdullah	IB	5-9	180	So.	Homewood, AL
	Jared Afalava	LB	6-3	215	Fr.	South Jordan, UT
	LeRoy Alexander	ATH	6-2	190	Fr.	Toledo, OH
7	Taariq Allen	WR	6-3	195	Fr.	Weston, MA
70	Kenny Anderson	DE	6-2	260	Sr.	Omaha
	Zaire Anderson	LB	6-1	220	Jr.	Philadelphia, PA
9	Jason Ankrah	DE	6-4	265	Jr.	Gaithersburg, MD
	Tommy Armstrong	QB	6-2	210	Fr.	Cibolo, TX
70	Nick Ash	OL	6-5	275	Jr.	Keller, TX
47	Walker Ashburn	DE	6-2	255	So.	Kenner, LA
82	Robert Barry	TE	6-8	245	Jr.	Battle Creek
2	Antonio Bell	CB	6-2	200	Sr.	Daytona Beach, FL
80	Kenny Bell	WR	6-1	180	So.	Boulder, CO
39	Justin Blatchford	S	6-1	200	Sr.	Ponca
	Jared Blum	DE	6-4	230	Fr.	Gretna
37	Mauro Bondi	PK	6-0	190	So.	Boca Raton, FL
9	Tyson Broekemeier	QB	6-1	175	Fr.	Aurora
	Thomas Brown	LB	6-2	210	Fr.	Gardena, CA
22	Rex Burkhead	IB	5-11	210	Sr.	Plano, TX
46	Sam Burtch	WR	6-3	175	Fr.	Elmwood
15	Brion Carnes	QB	6-1	200	So.	Bradenton, FL
7	Joseph Carter	DE	6-5	250	Sr.	Jackson, SC
51	Brandon Chapek	OL	6-5	305	Jr.	Wahoo
77	Seung Hoon Choi	OL	6-2	290	Sr.	Lincoln
	Cole Chvatal	WR	5-11	175	Fr.	Wahoo
	Carson Collins	FB	5-10	220	Fr.	Omaha
51	Will Compton	LB	6-2	230	Sr.	Bonne Terre, MO
6	Corey Cooper	S	6-1	210	So.	Maywood, IL
81	Ben Cotton	TE	6-6	255	Sr.	Ames, IA
68	Jake Cotton	OL	6-6	295	So.	Lincoln
	Sam Cotton	TE	6-4	240	Fr.	Lincoln
67	Scott Criss	OL	6-3	270	Jr.	Omaha
	Imani Cross	RB	6-1	220	Fr.	Gainesville, GA
	Aaron Curry	DT	6-3	275	Fr.	Keller, TX
13	Daniel Davie	DB	6-1	185	Fr.	Beatrice
31	Jase Dean	CB	6-0	200	Sr.	Bridgeport
87	Taylor Dixon	WR	5-11	195	Sr.	Wauneta
	Ross Dzuris	DE	6-3	225	Fr.	Plattsmouth
18	Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	210	Jr.	Moreno Valley, CA
17	Ciante Evans	CB	5-11	185	Jr.	Arlington, TX
88	Tyler Evans	WR	6-1	195	So.	Waverly
25	Joey Felici	DB	5-9	175	So.	Omaha
42	Sean Fisher	LB	6-6	235	Sr.	Omaha
	Sam Foltz	ATH	6-2	190	Fr.	Grand Island
30	Derek Foster	DB	5-11	190	So.	Elm Creek
	Trey Foster	TE	6-2	230	Fr.	Lincoln
	Ryker Fyfe	QB	6-3	195	Fr.	Grand Island
95	Jack Gangwish	LB	6-2	225	Fr.	Wood River
2	Aaron Green	IB	5-11	190	So.	San Antonio, TX
11	Andrew Green	CB	6-0	190	Jr.	San Antonio, TX
99	Jay Guy	DT	6-1	295	So.	Houston, TX
54	Aaron Hayes	OL	6-3	265	Fr.	Elkhorn
5	Braylon Heard	IB	5-11	180	So.	Youngstown, OH
	Taylor Hoffman	LB	6-0	200	Fr.	Oakland
35	Andrew Holt	DB	6-0	200	So.	Lee's Summitt, MO
85	KC Hyland	WR	6-6	215	Sr.	Lincoln
1	Harvey Jackson	S	6-2	205	So.	Fresno, TX
72	Justin Jackson	OL	6-3	270	Sr.	Roca
29	Seth Jameson	DB	6-1	200	Jr.	Southlake, TX
	Andy Janovich	FB	6-1	215	Fr.	Grenta
16	Stanley Jean-Baptiste	CB	6-3	220	Jr.	Miami, FL
	Garret Johns	OL	6-1	275	Fr.	Aurora
12	Ron Kellogg, III	QB	6-1	215	Jr.	Omaha
52	Ryan Klachko	OL	6-4	285	Fr.	Springfield, IL
44	Micah Kreikemeier	LB	6-3	220	Sr.	West Point
53	Adam Kucera	OL	6-6	295	Fr.	Litchfield
24	Murat Kuzu	RB	5-11	195	Fr.	Plano, TX
	Spencer Lindsay	PK	5-10	195	Fr.	Kearney
75	Chris Long	OL	6-4	260	Fr.	Blair
41	Jake Long	TE	6-4	240	Jr.	Elkhorn
61	Spencer Long	OL	6-4	305	Jr.	Elkhorn
96	Brett Maher	P/PK	6-0	185	Sr.	Kearney
92	P.J. Mangieri	LS	6-4	240	Sr.	Peoria, IL
49	Matt Manninger	LB	6-1	220	Sr.	Omaha
6	Tim Marlowe	WR	5-10	175	Sr.	Youngstown, OH
19	Mike Marrow	FB	6-2	250	Jr.	Holland, OH
21	Bronson Marsh	S	6-0	200	Fr.	Omaha
46	Eric Martin	DE	6-2	260	Sr.	Moreno Valley, CA
3	Taylor Martinez	QB	6-1	200	Jr.	Corona, CA
	Mitch McCann	LB	6-1	225	Fr.	Omaha
89	Conor McDermott	DE	6-2	255	Sr.	Omaha
	Greg McMullen	DE	6-5	255	Fr.	Akron, OH
34	Cameron Meredith	DE	6-4	260	Sr.	Huntington Beach, CA
32	Greg Milliken	DB	6-1	195	Fr.	Wahoo
5	Josh Mitchell	CB	5-11	165	So.	Corona, CA
	Alonzo Moore	ATH	6-2	170	Fr.	Winnfield, LA
52	J.C. Moore	DE	6-3	265	So.	Fremont
73	Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	So.	Clearwater, FL
	Avery Moss	DE	6-4	245	Fr.	Tempe, AZ
74	Mike Moudy	OL	6-5	305	So.	Castle Rock, CO
	Graham Nabity	RB	6-1	205	Fr.	Omaha
	Jordan Nelson	RB	5-8	175	Fr.	Omaha
69	Brodrick Nickens	OL	6-5	300	Jr.	Alliance
48	Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-2	265	So.	Maple Grove, MN
12	Courtney Osborne	S	6-3	200	Sr.	Garland, TX
21	Steven Osborne	WR	6-4	210	Sr.	Garland, TX
	Robby Painter	OL	6-6	270	Fr.	Centennial, CO
57	Todd Peat, Jr.	DT	6-3	305	Fr.	Tempe, AZ
56	Mark Pelini	OL	6-0	285	So.	Youngstown, OH
62	Cole Pensick	OL	6-2	275	Jr.	Lincoln
40	Max Pirman	LB	6-5	215	Fr.	Orrville, OH
66	Givens Price	OL	6-4	275	Fr.	Houston, TX
76	Brent Qvale	OL	6-7	320	Jr.	Williston, ND
53	Thaddeus Randle	DT	6-1	300	Jr.	Galena Park, TX
25	Kyler Reed	TE	6-3	230	Sr.	Shawnee, KS
65	Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	300	Fr.	Crete
	Brandon Reilly	WR	6-2	180	Fr.	Lincoln
19	Wil Richards	S	5-11	195	Jr.	Lee's Summit, MO
26	Anthony Ridder	QB	6-2	195	Fr.	West Point
36	Eddie Ridder	TE	6-6	225	Fr.	Elkhorn
43	Trevor Roach	LB	6-2	235	So.	Elkhorn
63	Andrew Rodriguez	OL	6-6	325	Jr.	Aurora
97	Chase Rome	DT	6-3	295	So.	Columbia, MO
	Michael Rose	LB	6-0	230	Fr.	Kansas City, MO
97	Joseph Rotherham	LS	6-0	200	Fr.	Green Bay, WI
59	Will Sailors	OL	6-3	255	Fr.	Lincoln
41	David Santos	LB	6-0	205	Fr.	Spring, TX
4	Mohammed Seisay	DB	6-2	200	Jr.	Springfield, VA
	Brad Simpson	LB	6-0	195	Fr.	Omaha
71	Jeremiah Sirles	OL	6-6	320	Jr.	Lakewood, CO
22	Derek Slaughter	LB	5-11	195	Fr.	Pelham, AL
13	P.J. Smith	S	6-2	210	Sr.	River Ridge, LA
3	Daimion Stafford	S	6-1	210	Sr.	Norco, CA
59	Colby Starkebaum	LB	6-1	220	Jr.	Sterling, CO
55	Baker Steinkuhler	DT	6-6	290	Sr.	Lincoln
57	Zach Sterup	OL	6-8	275	Fr.	Hastings
38	Graham Stoddard	LB	6-2	235	Sr.	Lincoln
98	David Sutton	TE	6-3	240	Fr.	Lincoln
40	Zach Taylor	IB	6-0	210	So.	Lincoln
79	Brandon Thompson	OL	6-6	300	Sr.	The Woodlands, TX
	Paul Thurston	OL	6-5	275	Fr.	Avada, CO
10	Jamal Turner	WR	6-1	180	So.	Arlington, TX
61	Jeff Uher	DT	6-1	275	So.	Omaha
	Dylan Utter	OL	6-2	300	Fr.	Papillion
	Vincent Valentine	DT	6-3	300	Fr.	Edwardsville, IL
91	Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	250	So.	Arlington, TX
16	Yusef Wade	DB	5-10	185	So.	Lincoln
10	Dijon Washington	CB	6-0	190	Jr.	Lawndale, CA
	Jordan Westerkamp	WR	6-2	195	Fr.	Lombard, IL
45	Alonzo Whaley	LB	6-1	235	Sr.	Madisonville, TX
	Corey Whitaker	OL	6-5	270	Fr.	Murrieta, CA
24	Austin Williams	DB	6-0	190	So.	Omaha
92	Kevin Williams	DT	6-2	270	Fr.	Holland, OH
26	Tyler Wullenwaber	WR	6-1	195	So.	Utica
30	Richard Wynne, Jr.	IB	5-9	170	Fr.	Omaha
31	C.J. Zimmerer	FB	6-0	235	Jr.	Omaha

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
T. Martinez	13	126.5	162	288	8	56.2	2089	13	61	160.7
R. Burkhead	13	0.0	0	2	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Bell	13	32	461	14.4	3	50	35.5
B. Kinnie	13	22	257	11.7	1	61	19.8
Q. Enunwa	13	21	293	14.0	2	36	22.5

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
R. Burkhead	13	284	1406	49	1357	4.8	15	52	104.4
T. Martinez	13	188	1040	166	874	4.6	9	57	67.2
A. Abdullah	13	42	172	22	150	3.6	3	24	11.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: L. David 133, W. Compton 82, D. Stafford 80
Tackles for loss: L. David 13, W. Compton 7, C. Meredith 6
Sacks: L. David 5.5, C. Meredith 5, E. Martin 2.5
Interceptions: L. David 2, A. Cassidy 2, six tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Nebraska will join the trend of using alternate uniforms this fall when the Huskers ditch their traditional look for one game.

Athletic director **Tom Osborne** made the announcement during the spring that the school is working with adidas to come up with an alternate look. Osborne said the change won't be radical, "but it will be something that stands out."

Osborne's announcement touched off a minor firestorm around the Cornhusker state.

Traditionalists cringed at the thought of changing the Huskers' iconic look. Those with a more progressive bent applauded the move to at least inch toward what schools such as Oregon have been doing for most of the past decade.

Nebraska did don an alternate look in 2009, when the Huskers wore replica 1962 uniforms against Louisiana-Lafayette to commemorate the 300th consecutive sellout at Memorial Stadium.

• One of the more intriguing developments to keep tabs will be **Braylon Heard's** transition from offense to cornerback.

Heard was part of the logjam at I-back last season with **Ameer Abdullah** and Aaron Green. Heard got only 25 carries, as the three freshmen saw limited action behind **Rex Burkheard**. The offensive backfield figures to get even more crowded with transfer **Mike Marrow** and recruit **Imani Cross** joining the mix.

So Heard, who played cornerback in high school, decided to make the switch, although it's to a position that appears equally stocked with talent.

"He has all the skills and footwork to be really good there," coach **Bo Pelini** said. "He is one of those guys that could play a number of spots and help our football team. I know he can play running back and I'm pretty sure he could play receiver.

"He wanted to give corner a shot, and I think he has a heck of an opportunity."

• Any discussion of having offensive guard **Spencer Long** switch positions was a short one, Pelini said. The Huskers are looking to replace two-year starting center **Mike Caputo**, but Pelini said moving Long, a second-team All-Big Ten performer last season, was not considered.

"I like Spencer where he is now," Pelini said. "We feel good about the center spot and the potential we have there."

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"Offensively, they talk quite a bit about the second year with the same offense. They are really hanging their hat on the fact that Taylor Martinez, for the first time in his career, including high school, has been in the same offense for two years. I think it's a unique offense. Schematically, it's cutting edge. It's just a matter of how well they execute it. Their expectations are high at Nebraska in general, and I think their expectations about their offense are very high. And they should be, with Burkhead and Abdullah and Enunwa and Bell on the perimeter.

"The defense has a chance to be one of the better defenses in the conference. It has to complement the offense, get off the field on third down. But I think Nebraska's season hangs in the balance based on what its offense does, not its defense."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Baker Steinkuhler
Photo by Steve Beyer

"I like the potential we have coming back on defense," he said. "We have a lot of good young talent that needs to keep developing."

For the second season in a row, a revamped defensive staff will be in charge of that task. Defensive coordinator Carl Pelini left to become head coach at Florida International and secondary coach Corey Raymond returned to LSU, his alma mater.

Pelini promoted John Papuchis to the coordinator's position, hired Rick Kaczenski from Iowa to coach the defensive line and brought in Terry Joseph from Tennessee to take over the secondary.

Among the coaches' priorities is shoring up a pass rush — the Huskers ranked 84th nationally in sacks and 112th in tackles for losses — and putting more bite into the team's third-down defense. The Huskers ranked 64th nationally as opponents converted 40.2 percent of their third-down opportunities in 2011.

That percentage was 30.0 in 2010 and 32.3 in 2009.

"I think a lot of those were not manageable third downs," defensive end Cameron Meredith said. "They were third-and-2 and third-and-3, which is not where you want to be as a defense."

Meredith and tackle Baker Steinkuhler are the leaders across the front, and the Huskers also return a starter in junior Jason Ankrah. Injuries to four tackles — Todd Peat, Thad Randle, Chase Rome and Kevin Williams — leave Kaczenski needing to sort things out in preseason camp.

The Huskers are loaded with experience at linebacker in seniors Will Compton, Sean Fisher and Alonzo Whaley. Joseph can sort through 14 lettermen in the secondary, nine of whom started at least once in 2011. Toss in highly regarded junior college transfer Mohammed Seisay and converted I-back Braylon Heard, and Joseph has plenty of options from which to choose.

"The depth in the secondary makes us versatile," Pelini said

SPECIAL TEAMS

Nebraska has a triple-threat guy in senior Brett Maher, who kicks, punts and kicks off. Maher was the first player to be named All-Big Ten as a kicker and punter in the same season since 2001.

He made 19 of 23 field-goal attempts,

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Rex Burkhead

Has chance to finish his career as one of most productive I-backs in school history. ... His 1,357 rushing yards in 2011 were the most by Nebraska running back since 1997. ... Unquestioned durability — he carried the ball at least 20 times in eight games last season and finished with 284 attempts. ... Good hands make him an excellent receiving threat as well as dependable return man. ... Earned Academic All-America and All-Big Ten honors as a junior.

EMERGING STAR

SS Daimion Stafford

Already has posted solid numbers (80 tackles in 2011), but has a chance to become headline performer on defense that lost its top three players. ... Can be a savage hitter for a defense that will be looking for playmakers. ... Led the Huskers in pass breakups (10) and finished third on the team in total tackles. ... Must work on becoming more consistent and avoid breakdowns that left him out of position at times in his first season in Husker system.

TOP NEWCOMER

CB Mohammed Seisay

Huskers hope junior college transfer can emerge as a playmaker in a defensive backfield loaded with experienced players. ... Enrolled in January and participated in spring drills. ... Intercepted six passes and had 22 tackles at Eastern Arizona Junior College last season. ... Began collegiate career at Memphis, where he earned Conference-USA All-Freshman honors in 2010. ... Started 12 games for Memphis as a redshirt freshman and had two interceptions.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.1	75
Rushing	147.1	62
Passing	175.7	101
Total	322.8	99
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	10.4	1
Rushing	93.1	9
Passing	178.9	18
Total	272.0	7
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.36	33

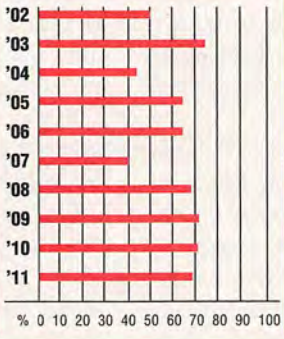
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.9	39
Rushing	247.6	9
Passing	150.6	113
Total	398.1	44
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	17.4	9
Rushing	153.1	63
Passing	153.6	5
Total	306.8	11
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.07	62

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.2	50
Rushing	217.2	15
Passing	162.7	104
Total	379.9	66
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.4	42
Rushing	158.5	64
Pass	192.2	18
Total	350.7	37
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.08	67

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

9-4, 5-3

W	CHATTANOOGA	40-7
W	FRESNO STATE	42-29
W	WASHINGTON	51-38
W	at Wyoming	38-14
L	at Wisconsin	17-48
W	OHIO STATE	34-27
W	at Minnesota	41-14
W	MICHIGAN STATE	24-3
L	NORTHWESTERN	25-28
W	at Penn State	17-14
L	at Michigan	17-45
W	IOWA	20-7
	Capital One Bowl	
L	vs. South Carolina	13-30

PLAYER PROFILE

Rex Burkhead
Photo by Joe Robbins

Workhorse Welcomes Help in Backfield

Less might be more for Rex Burkhead.

A season ago, Burkhead accounted for 73 percent of the carries by Nebraska's running backs. His 284 attempts, which were two shy of the school record, resulted in Burkhead gaining 1,357 yards and scoring 15 touchdowns.

He did so with nary a complaint, not even after hearing his number called 35 times against Michigan State or a school-record 38 times against Iowa. Nebraska's Mr. Dependable took every licking administered by opposing defenses in stride.

"You feel it," Burkhead said, referring to the workload's toll on body and mind.

"You don't want to have that as an excuse or complain about it. I'm not going to lie to you; you feel it, but you try your best to push through it and perform like you always have."

Burkhead (5-11, 210) heads into his senior season knowing that Tim Beck, Nebraska's second-year offensive coordinator, is committed to taking some of the pressure off him. Beck might have to alter his plans just a bit after highly regarded sophomore Aaron Green decided to transfer at the end of the spring semester.

But Beck still has Ameer Abdullah, another fleet sophomore with unlimited potential, to spell Burkhead at I-back. Then there's 250-pound Mike Marrow, an Alabama transfer who can play fullback and short-yardage tailback, and incoming freshman Imani Cross.

"It will definitely help in games, recovering from week to week and just staying fresh," said Burkhead, referring to Beck's desire to cut back on his carries. "You have to have multiple backs because it is a long season, especially in the Big Ten Conference."

Burkhead earned first-team all-conference honors last season after finishing third in the league in rushing and 19th nationally.

He also was a semifinalist for the Doak Walker Award, as well as an Academic All-American.

Burkhead, who logged seven 100-yard games as a junior, has amassed 2,654 rushing yards and has a chance to finish in the top five on the school's career rushing chart.

"He's a tremendous football player and great leader, and the kind of person you want to model your program around," coach Bo Pelini said.

"But I think Rex will be the first one to tell you there are a lot of things he can do better. The more he plays, the more he grows in the game. He works so hard that I don't see any reason why that won't continue to happen."

including 16 of 17 from inside 50 yards. His 7.7 points per game ranked third among Big Ten kickers, and he averaged 44.5-yards per punt, with 25 being downed inside the 20.

Ameer Abdullah is dangerous on kick returns, as he finished ninth nationally and had seven returns for more than 35 yards. One was for a touchdown of 100 yards against Fresno State, when he set a school record with 211 return yards.

Jamal Turner and Rex Burkhead also are capable in the return game.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Last season's move to the Big Ten stressed the Huskers, who had to adjust to a new opponent every week of the season while making the switch from the more finesse Big 12 to the more physical Big Ten.

Nebraska will have a greater sense of comfort in its second go-round, but the schedule remains challenging. The Huskers do play Wisconsin and Michigan — two of the three league teams they lost to in 2011 — at home this season, but they will have to travel to Michigan State and Ohio State.

The Badgers' trip to Lincoln for a Sept. 29 contest opens what could be a defining six-week stretch for the Huskers, who then play at Ohio State (Oct. 6), Northwestern (Oct. 20) and Michigan State (Nov. 3) on the road and Michigan (Oct. 27) at home.

— Steve Pivovar

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	SOUTHERN MISS	12-2
Sept. 8	at UCLA	6-8
Sept. 15	ARKANSAS STATE	10-3
Sept. 22	IDAHO STATE	2-9
Sept. 29	WISCONSIN	11-3
Oct. 6	at Ohio State	6-7
Oct. 20	at Northwestern	6-7
Oct. 27	MICHIGAN	11-2
Nov. 3	at Michigan State	11-3
Nov. 10	PENN STATE	9-4
Nov. 17	MINNESOTA	3-9
Nov. 23	at Iowa	7-6

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NORTHWESTERN WILDCATS

For more coverage of the Wildcats, visit northwestern.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mick McCall | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Hankwitz** | **STADIUM: Ryan Field: 47,130**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
6-7, 3-5 Big Ten (5th, Legends)

COACH:
Pat Fitzgerald — At Northwestern: 40-36, 6 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
12; 5 offense, 5 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Kain Colter, WR Tony Jones, LG Brian Mulroe, DE Tyler Scott, DE Quentin Williams, DT Brian Arnfelt, MLB David Nwabuisi, S Ibraheim Campbell

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Wildcats are blessed with size, speed and depth at receiver, which will give Colter plenty of options and not force him to scramble so frequently. Mulroe leads a veteran offensive line. The defensive line could be the best at NU in several years, and there is a load of speed and experience at linebacker.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The young secondary retains just one starter and the three new guys have one start between them. With the exception of return savant Venric Mark, the special teams are below average. The running game doesn't have a bell cow, though Treyvon Green and Mike Trumpy and incoming freshman Malin Jones could develop into such.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Dan Persa, WR Jeremy Ebert, TE Drake Dunsmore, LT Al Netter, RG Ben Burkett, CB Jordan Mabin, S Brian Peters

OVERVIEW:
There are questions at several positions, but many of the potential answers hail from the recent recruiting classes that have been well-regarded. If these inexperienced Wildcats are ready for their turn, then they ought to deliver the program's fifth bowl bid in a row.

Inexperienced Cats Seek Another Postseason Appearance

Using the most basic objective measurement in team sports, there's an undeniable trend at Northwestern.

After recording nine wins in 2008 — the school's best showing since Pat Fitzgerald starred at middle linebacker for Gary Barnett's back-to-back Big Ten champs in 1995-96 — the Wildcats' win total has dropped by one in each of the past three seasons.

Does that mean we can pencil in a five-win season for Northwestern in 2012?

Not so fast.

"I don't think there's anybody here who's pleased with the way that we played a year ago and the way that we coached," Fitzgerald said.

"So we took that inward approach all offseason: 'How can we teach better? What are we asking our guys to do? What are the strengths of our guys? Are we asking our guys to do too much?' You know, all of those things that you beat yourself up with in the offseason.

"But did I say, 'Oh, my gosh, we lost one more game than we did a year ago?' No. That never came up in the conversation. It sounds sexy, though."

Here's why Fitzgerald hasn't fixated on the win column: He firmly believes that his roster, from top to bottom, has become more talented in each of the past several seasons. There are more speedsters, particularly at linebacker and receiver. There are more high-profile recruits, such as five-star USC transfer Kyle Prater and four-star freshmen Ifeadi Odenigbo, Greg Kuhar and Adam DiPietro.

While the Wildcats won't be projected to challenge for the Legends Division title — not after losing 12 starters from a six-win team and not making any splashy coordinator firings and hirings — Fitzgerald gets a vibe from his players that takes him back to one NU team near the start of this victory cycle.

"It reminds me a lot of the '09 team," Fitzgerald said.

"We're going to be a little younger (like that team). A change in quarterback. People asking who's going to take over for (running back) Tyrell (Sutton). A lot of question marks. And it's great. Our chemistry was phenomenal on that team and I see those things happening right now."

Fitzgerald plans to aid that chemistry by keeping everything focused on the collective. He felt so strongly about quarterback Dan Persa last offseason, he proclaimed Persa to be a worthy Heisman Trophy candidate. Fitzgerald will keep superlatives to himself this time around.

"For the first time in awhile, I'm not sure if I'm ready to anoint anyone as an All-Big Ten player," he said. "Even when I think we might have our best talent to have All-Big Ten players. Does that make any sense?"

OFFENSE

In a perfect world, Dan Persa wouldn't have re-injured his leg last summer and he could have directed Northwestern's veteran offense from Game 1 through Game 13. Instead, Persa sat out the first three games and spent the rest of the season playing with limits that kept him from being the same dual-threat quarterback he had been in 2010.

While Persa's injuries helped to keep Northwestern from maximizing its potential last season, it allowed junior quarterback Kain Colter to gain invaluable experience for this season. Colter was an even better running threat than Persa, as he led the Wildcats with 654 yards and nine touchdowns on the ground.

Ibraheim Campbell
Photo by Scott Boehm

On the other hand, Colter didn't have Persa's arm strength, as his throwing shoulder wasn't 100 percent because of a serious injury suffered as a high school senior in 2009.

While he hit 55 of 82 passes for 673 yards, with six touchdowns and one interception, Colter was pulled on occasion for redshirt freshman Trevor Siemian when the Wildcats needed to get down the field quickly.

Colter did more strength work on his shoulder during the winter and said he felt great throughout spring ball. He kept the starter's job in the spring — though Fitzgerald expects Siemian to make another run in the fall — and will have a wealth of receivers at his disposal.

Northwestern lost first-team All-Big Ten slot receiver Jeremy Ebert to graduation, but nobody seems too worried because of the team's depth and talent. The Wildcats moved senior Demetrius Fields and sophomore Christian Jones, last year's starting wideouts, into the slot to take advantage of their size and skills. Junior Mike Jensen will contribute as well.

Sophomore Tony Jones, a rocket who missed last year with a knee problem, will be the big-play threat on the perimeter, while junior Rashad Lawrence and redshirt freshmen Cameron Dickerson and Pierre Youngblood-Ary also have plenty to offer. Dickerson leaped over a first-string cornerback to snag a 40-yard touchdown pass in the spring game.

"This is as deep a group as we've ever had," Fitzgerald said.

Sophomore Treyvon Green (362 yards, four touchdowns) and junior Mike Trumpy, who tore his ACL in the Big Ten opener last fall and missed spring ball for rehab purposes, enter the fall as co-leaders at running back. But true freshmen Malin Jones and Stephen Buckley have a chance to become parts of the rotation.

The running back derby won't matter too much if Northwestern can't find five solid offensive linemen. The Wildcats lost two four-year starters from a unit that surrendered 42 sacks.

Senior Patrick Ward, a two-year starter at right tackle, flips to left tackle to replace the graduated Al Netter. Ward, senior left guard Brian Mulroe and sophomore center Brandon Vitabile should be competent, but the right side is in flux. Redshirt freshman Shane Mertz is a name to remember.

DEFENSE

During the Wildcats' first five Big Ten games last fall, they never allowed fewer than 34 points. To no one's surprise, Northwestern went 1-4 during that stretch.

But during the Wildcats' final five games last season, they never allowed as many as 34 points. Among other things, that improvement enabled Northwest-

Venric Mark
Photo by Scott Boehm

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Kain Colter	Jr.	Directed the huge win at Nebraska.	Trevor Siemian, So.
RB	Treyvon Green	So.	Posted 362 yards and four TDs in spot duty.	Mike Trumpy, Jr.
WR	Rashad Lawrence	Jr.	Nine catches in final three games.	Cameron Dickerson, Fr.
SR	Demetrius Fields*	Sr.	Moves inside after two years as starting WR.	Mike Jensen, Jr.
SR	Christian Jones*	So.	Has whole package; breakout candidate.	Drew Moulton, Jr.
WR	Tony Jones	So.	With knee healed, he'll stretch defense.	Pierre Youngblood-Ary, Fr.
LT	Patrick Ward*	Sr.	Shifts sides after two years at right tackle.	Paul Jorgensen, So.
LG	Brian Mulroe*	Sr.	Athletic leader boasts 27 straight starts.	Geoff Mogus, Fr.
C	Brandon Vitabile*	So.	Started every game last year.	Matt Frazier, Fr.
RG	Neal Deiters	Sr.	Was the starting right tackle in 2009.	Hayden Baker, So.
RT	Chuck Porcelli	Sr.	Job is in flux; two youngsters on Porcelli's heels.	Shane Mertz, Fr.
K	Jeff Budzien*	Jr.	Converted 2 of 5 FGs of 40-plus yards.	Steve Flaherty, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Tyler Scott	Jr.	Started first six games before hurting shoulder.	Anthony Battle, Jr.
DT	Brian Arnfelt	Sr.	Broken foot ruined last year.	Chance Carter, So.
DT	Will Hampton	Jr.	Texas native flashed lots of potential.	Sean McEvilly, So.
DE	Quentin Williams*	Sr.	Sure and steady pass rusher.	Deonte Gibson, Fr.
LB	Collin Ellis*	So.	Started nine games as a redshirt freshman.	Roderick Goodlow, Sr.
LB	David Nwabuisi*	Sr.	Speedster led NU with 8.5 TFLs.	Damien Proby, Jr.*
LB	Chi Chi Ariguzo	So.	Looked good before breaking collarbone.	Drew Smith, Fr.
CB	Nick VanHoose	Fr.	Has the size and athleticism the 'Cats crave.	C.J. Bryant, So.
CB	Daniel Jones	So.	First start came in last year's bowl game.	Demetrius Dugar, Sr.
S	Ibraheim Campbell*	So.	Posted 56 tackles in last six games.	Hunter Bates, Sr.
S	Davion Fleming	Jr.	Seven stops to show for first two years.	Jimmy Hall, So.
P	Brandon Williams*	Jr.	Averaged 40.3 yards in two seasons.	Chris Gradone, Fr.

*Returning Starter

WILDCATS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Greg Kuhar
A standout wrestler in high school, the 6-3, 285-pound Kuhar is a prototypical nose tackle. His years of wrestling have taught him the importance of leverage and body positioning, and he complements that with a non-stop motor. Northwestern coaches have told him he'll have a shot to fight for playing time as a freshman.

Ifeadi Odenigbo
The 6-4, 220-pound Odenigbo is far from realizing his full potential, but it has been awhile since Northwestern has fielded a prospect with Odenigbo's skill set. Although a red-shirt year to gain weight and experience would do him well, he may be too athletic to leave on the bench next fall.

Malin Jones
The first commitment in Northwestern's 2012 class, the 6-2, 190-pound Jones can fulfil all the duties the Wildcat's require out of their running back position. He can run between the tackles; he is elusive in space and he will be an asset as a receiver out of the backfield.

THE SLEEPER

Adam DePietro
Having the ability to play most of the positions across the offensive line increases the 6-5, 270-pound DePietro's value to the Wildcats. Physically, he is still a year or two away from competing at the Big Ten level, but his understanding of the technical aspects of the position are beyond his years.

Committments	21
Average Stars	2.76
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	2
★★★☆☆	12
★★☆☆☆	7
Total Stars	58
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 8

2013 NEEDS: After signing a class of 21 in 2012, Northwestern has pretty solid young talent all across the board. But an early look at the positions the Wildcat's coaching staff are targeting early in 2013 shows a lot of offers out at the quarterback and running back positions. Junior quarterback Kain Colter and sophomore running back Treyvon Green showed great promise in their first years seeing significant action, but both are still young and somewhat unproven.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Terrance Brown	DB	6-1	195	★★★	Los Alamitos, CA	Los Alamitos
Recorded 77 tackles, two interceptions and two forced fumbles in six games as a senior...Four-year letterman.						
Stephen Buckley	ATH	6-0	178	★★	Forney, TX	North Forney
Rushed for 1,352 yards and 25 touchdowns and passed for 923 yards and eight TDs as a senior...Also participated in track.						
Adam DePietro	OL	6-5	270	★★★	Lancaster, PA	Lancaster Catholic
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 65 offensive tackle... Selected to compete in the Chesapeake Bowl and Pennsylvania and Ohio's Big 33 game.						
Chris Fitzpatrick	OL	6-1	235	★★	Lawrenceburg, KY	Anderson County
Regarded as one of the best long snappers in the country... Second-team all-state selection.						
Traveon Henry	DB	6-1	200	★★★	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Pine Crest
Rated as the No. 87 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 33 safety... Had 57 tackles, five interceptions, three pass breakups as a senior.						
Joseph Jones	DB	6-1	200	★★	Plano, IL	Plano
All-conference selection...Rushed for 710 yards and eight touchdowns as a senior... Earned academic all-conference honors for both football and track.						
Malin Jones	RB	6-2	190	★★★	Naperville, IL	Joliet Catholic
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 26 running back...Rushed for 4,087 yards and 57 touchdowns during his career.						
Greg Kuhar	DT	6-3	285	★★★★	Concord Township, OH	St. Edward
Rated as the No. 19 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 19 defensive tackle... Recorded 126 total tackles and 24 sacks as a senior.						
Dean Lowry	DE	6-5	225	★★★	Rockford, IL	Boylan
Rated as the No. 17 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 34 strongside defensive end... Recorded 65 tackles, 21 tackles for loss and 10 sacks as a senior.						
Connor Mahoney	DT	6-4	270	★★	Malvern, PA	Malvern Prep
First-team all-state selection...Participated in the Chesapeake Bowl...Team captain as a senior.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Mike McHugh	WR	6-2	185	★★★	Kirkwood, MO	Kirkwood
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Missouri by Rivals.com... Had 33 receptions for 980 yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior.						
Ifeadi Odenigbo	DE	6-4	220	★★★★	Centerville, OH	Centerville
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 9 weakside defensive end...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game.						
Eric Olson	OL	6-6	265	★★★	Cambridge, MA	Buckingham Browne & Nichols
Rated as the No. 5 prospect in Massachusetts by Rivals.com... Two-time all-conference selection.						
Ian Park	OL	6-4	295	★★★	Pittsburgh, PA	Upper St. Clair
Selected to play in Ohio and Pennsylvania's Big 33 game... Selected by USA Football to the 2012 U.S. Under-19 National Team...Two-time all-conference selection.						
Kenton Playko	OL	6-5	270	★★★	Lewis Center, OH	Olentangy
Three-time Ohio Valley Conference all-academic honors...Also played lacrosse.						
Jaylen Prater	LB	6-0	214	★★	Wellston, OH	Wellston
First-team all-district and second-team All-Ohio as a senior...Had 80 tackles in eight games as a senior.						
Andrew Scanlan	WR	6-2	190	★★	Royersford, PA	Spring Ford
Caught 52 passes for 836 yards and 10 touchdowns as a senior... Selected to play in Ohio and Pennsylvania's Big 33 game.						
Jack Schwaba	TE	6-5	240	★★★	Pittsburgh, PA	Upper St. Clair
Rated as the No. 32 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com... First-team all-conference selection.						
Dan Vitale	ATH	6-2	205	★★	Wheaton, IL	Wheaton Warrenville South
Rushed for 1,340 yards and 17 touchdowns as a senior... All-area first-team selection.						
Dwight White	DB	5-11	175	★★★	Cypress, TX	Cy-Fair
Recorded 70 tackles, three interceptions and two forced fumbles as a senior.						
Eric Wilson	DB	6-1	202	★★★	Redford, MI	Lee M Thurston
Rated as the No. 20 prospect in Michigan by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 50 safety... Earned all-state, all-conference and all-metro honors.						

WILDCATS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
44	Chi Chi Ariguzo	LB	6-3	220	So.	Gahanna, OH
91	Brian Arnfelt	DL	6-5	300	Sr.	Lake Elmo, MN
65	Hayden Baker	OL	6-2	280	So.	Trout Valley
7	Hunter Bates	S	5-10	180	Sr.	Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
96	Anthony Battle	DL	6-2	240	Jr.	Dolton
12	Cermak Bland	WR	5-11	170	Fr.	West Linn, OR
13	C.J. Bryant	CB	5-11	175	So.	Gahanna, OH
37	Jeff Budzien	PK	5-11	165	Jr.	Hartland, WI
24	Ibraheim Campbell	DB	5-11	205	So.	Philadelphia, PA
39	Joe Cannon	DB	6-0	175	So.	Oconomowoc, WI
15	P.J. Carollo	QB	6-1	180	Fr.	Lake Bluff
27	Jared Carpenter	S	6-0	205	Sr.	Bowling Green, KY
18	Matt Carpenter	DB	6-2	200	Fr.	Dayton, OH
99	Chance Carter	DL	6-3	270	So.	Evanston
58	Max Chapman	DL	6-3	230	Fr.	Ponte Vedra, FL
1	Bo Cisek	DL	6-2	290	Sr.	Chicago
2	Kain Colter	QB	6-0	190	Jr.	Denver, CO
95	Davon Custis	DL	6-3	255	Jr.	Gahanna, OH
79	Neal Deiters	OL	6-8	315	Sr.	Elmhurst
19	Cameron Dickerson	WR	6-3	200	Fr.	Englewood, NJ
41	Doug Diedrick	LB	5-10	215	Fr.	Woodridge
22	Demetrius Dugar	CB	5-11	175	Sr.	Houston, TX
88	Torin Dupper	WR	6-1	190	So.	Decatur, AL
45	Collin Ellis	LB	6-2	225	So.	St. Gabriel, LA
36	Mike Eshun	DB	5-8	170	So.	Madison, WI
8	Demetrius Fields	WR	6-0	210	Sr.	Dallas, TX
34	Steve Flaherty	PK	6-1	180	Sr.	Chicago
16	Davion Fleming	DB	5-10	200	Jr.	Upland, CA
57	Matt Frazier	OL	6-4	290	Fr.	Bourbonnais
98	Deonte Gibson	DL	6-3	240	Fr.	Lakewood, OH
48	Roderick Goodlow	LB	6-2	220	Sr.	Dallas, TX
31	Chris Gradone	P	6-2	190	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
22	Treyvon Green	RB	5-10	215	So.	Mesquite, TX
9	Jimmy Hall	DB	6-2	205	So.	Toledo, OH
92	Will Hampton	DL	6-3	285	Jr.	Houston, TX
28	Tim Hanrahan	RB	6-0	195	So.	Frankfort
59	Pat Hickey	LS	6-0	205	Jr.	Chicago
80	Mike Jensen	WR	6-0	180	Jr.	Rancho Santa Fe, CA
14	Christian Jones	WR	6-3	225	So.	Houston, TX
15	Daniel Jones	DB	5-11	170	So.	Monticello, FL
6	Tony Jones	WR	6-0	185	So.	Flint, Mich.
3	Tyris Jones	RB	6-0	220	Sr.	Fort Wayne, IN
78	Paul Jorgensen	OL	6-6	295	So.	DeWitt, MI
75	Jack Konopka	OL	6-5	285	So.	Inverness
17	Rashad Lawrence	WR	6-2	185	Jr.	Orlando, FL
5	Venric Mark	WR	5-8	175	Jr.	Tomball, TX
67	Sean McEvilly	DL	6-5	275	So.	Yorba Linda, CA
71	Shane Mertz	OL	6-8	295	Fr.	Hazlet, NJ
53	Geoff Mogus	OL	6-5	280	Fr.	Lorain, OH
84	Drew Moulton	WR	5-11	180	Jr.	Freeland, MI
72	Brian Mulroe	OL	6-4	295	Sr.	Glenview
33	David Nwabuisi	LB	6-1	240	Sr.	Houston, TX
10	Zack Oliver	QB	6-4	235	Fr.	Baton Rouge, LA
38	Arthur Omilian	PK	5-11	160	Fr.	Atlanta, GA
62	Taylor Paxton	OL	6-4	295	Jr.	Centennial, CO
25	Jordan Perkins	RB	6-0	180	Fr.	Lodi, CA
61	Alex Pietrzak	OL	6-4	290	Fr.	Burr Ridge
82	John Plasencia	SB	6-5	255	Jr.	Tampa, FL
74	Chuck Porcelli	OL	6-7	315	Sr.	Oak Brook
21	Kyle Prater	WR	6-5	215	Jr.	Maywood
46	Damien Proby	LB	6-0	235	Jr.	North Las Vegas, NV
43	Tim Riley	SB	6-3	220	Jr.	Oswego
90	C.J. Robbins	DL	6-5	275	Fr.	Peru
97	Tyler Scott	DL	6-4	265	Jr.	Warren, OH
13	Trevor Siemian	QB	6-3	210	So.	Windermere, FL
87	Brian Smith	SB	6-7	285	Jr.	Medina, OH
55	Drew Smith	LB	6-1	205	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
56	Will Studlien	LB	6-2	225	Jr.	Sunbury, OH
85	Mark Szott	SB	6-4	240	Fr.	Naperville
32	Mike Trumpy	RB	6-1	210	Jr.	Wheaton
23	Nick VanHoose	DB	6-0	185	Fr.	Urbana, OH
50	Timmy Vernon	LB	6-3	225	Jr.	Fort Washington, PA
66	Brandon Vitabile	OL	6-3	300	So.	Edison, NJ
70	Patrick Ward	OL	6-7	310	Sr.	Homer Glen
81	Evan Watkins	QB	6-6	245	Jr.	Carol Stream
49	Brandon Williams	P	6-2	185	Jr.	Nappanee, IN
4	Jarrell Williams	DB	5-11	190	Fr.	Robbins
88	Quentin Williams	DL	6-4	255	Sr.	Pittsburgh, PA
11	Pierre Youngblood-Ary	WR	6-3	185	Fr.	Orlando, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Persa	10	154.8	218	297	7	73.4	2376	17	90	237.6
K. Colter	13	157.7	55	82	1	67.1	673	6	81	51.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Ebert	13	75	1060	14.1	11	90	81.5
D. Dunsmore	13	45	522	11.6	6	69	40.2
K. Colter	13	43	466	10.8	3	57	35.8

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
K. Colter	13	135	758	104	654	4.8	9	46	50.3
J. Schmidt	13	107	476	5	471	4.4	6	32	36.2
T. Green	13	97	368	6	362	3.7	4	15	27.8

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: I. Campbell 100, B. Peters 92, D. Nwabuisi 84
Tackles for loss: D. Nwabuisi 8.5, J. DiNardo 6.5, B. McNaul 6
Sacks: V. Browne 3, J. DiNardo 3, Q. Williams 3
Interceptions: B. Peters 5, I. Campbell 2, five tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

When wide receiver **Kyle Prater** chose USC coming out of Proviso West High School in suburban Chicago, Rivals.com ranked him as the No. 2 prospect in the Class of 2010. But Prater caught just one pass for six yards during two years as a Trojan; he redshirted one season and dealt with multiple injuries during the other.

Prater transferred to Northwestern in time for the spring quarter, which enabled him to practice for part of spring ball. While NCAA rules require transfers to sit out one year before playing, the Wildcats filed paperwork after spring practice to request immediate eligibility.

"I hope we'll hear by the end of the summer," said coach **Pat Fitzgerald**. "We'll see how that goes."

If the 6-5, 215-pound Prater gets clearance to play, he gives the Wildcats a threat they've never had on the perimeter. Quarterback **Kain Colter**, who moved into an apartment with Prater and long-ball threat **Tony Jones** this summer, can't wait to join forces on the field.

"He's a great guy," Colter said. "He's a goofball once you get to know him. He came in here and warmed up to us real quick. He's just a guy who loves competing."

• Northwestern ranked last in the Big Ten in 2011 with 16 sacks in 13 games. Senior defensive end **Quentin Williams** is the top returnee with three sacks.

While it's always hard to estimate pass-rush prowess based on the spring game — with quarterbacks being "sacked" when touched — the Wildcats had several players step forward.

Redshirt freshman defensive end **Deonte Gibson**, who piled up an absurd 22 sacks during his senior year at national powerhouse St. Edward in suburban Cleveland, posted two sacks during the spring scrimmage. He gained 20 pounds during his first season to make himself a factor for this season.

Junior defensive end **Tyler Scott**, who'll start ahead of Gibson, earned 1.5 sacks, while fifth-year senior tackle **Brian Arnfelt** added one sack.

• Running back **Mike Trumpy** (knee), linebacker **Damien Proby** (knee), quarterback-turned-superback **Evan Watkins** (hip) and safety **Jared Carpenter** (hip) sat out spring ball. All are expected to be important pieces this fall.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"They probably have the most challenging nonconference schedule in the Big Ten. It's possible they could improve as a team and not have as good a record as a year ago. Dan Persa impacted that program as much as any one player impacted a program in the Big Ten. So, they lose a guy who did an incredible amount for the offense. Kain Colter is a great prospect at quarterback; a great athlete. We'll just have to wait and see how he develops. And they need a tailback.

"On defense, points of emphasis in the spring were becoming more physical, simplifying the scheme. The challenge to them becoming more physical is that Northwestern's defense is always going against a true spread offense in camp. That makes it difficult for them to develop a physical style, and yet they're in a physical division."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Brian Mulroe
Photo by Scott Boehm

ern to win at ninth-ranked Nebraska and to hang with Legends Division champ Michigan State until the final two minutes.

What changed?

The Wildcats addressed some communication issues that helped to allow an inordinate amount of big plays. Some of their younger players, including sophomores Ibraheim Campbell and Collin Ellis, gained some experience to accentuate their potential. Some personnel changes enabled upperclassmen such as defensive end Quentin Williams to get more snaps.

Despite those improvements, Northwestern still has a long way to go to become a middle-of-the-pack Big Ten defense. Campbell is the only returnee in the secondary, as four-year cornerback Jordan Mabin and three-year safety Brian Peters (a first-team All-Big Ten pick by the media) are gone.

The Wildcats are counting on redshirt freshman Nick VanHoose and sophomore Daniel Jones to headline a green cornerback unit.

"VanHoose reminds us a lot of Sherrick McManis," said Fitzgerald, referring to NU's All-Big Ten corner who is starting his third year with the Houston Texans. "He's really athletic. A great football IQ. Plays with a great passion. Great hips. Great feet. Physical corner."

The defensive line's prospects have a similar makeup. Williams (three sacks) is the only returning starter, but big things are expected of senior defensive tackle Brian Arnfelt (who missed most of last season with a broken foot) and junior Tyler Scott. The latter's pass-rushing skills make him a breakout candidate.

The Wildcats have plenty of options at linebacker. Senior David Nwabuisi, who led NU with 8.5 tackles for loss while splitting the season between the middle and the outside, will start the fall at the MIKE.

Sophomores Chi Chi Ariguzo and Collin Ellis — primary examples of the coaching staff's emphasis on recruiting better speed — will start again on the outside. Junior Damien Proby, who started the final seven games at MLB, provides flexibility and competence both inside and out. Don't be stunned if redshirt freshman Drew Smith makes his presence felt sooner than later.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Wildcats ranked second nationally last year in punt returns (15.9-yard

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

QB Kain Colter

A true triple-threat last year as he threw for 673 yards, rushed for 654 yards and had 466 receiving yards. ... In relief of the injured Dan Persa, he stunned No. 9 Nebraska in Lincoln with three second-half touchdowns. ... Earned Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week honor for his efforts that week. ... Put on 10 pounds in offseason and rehabbed his throwing shoulder back to 100 percent. ... Father and uncle played Division I football. Uncle Cleveland Colter was an All-American safety at USC.

EMERGING STAR

DT Brian Arnfelt

Numbers don't tell the story here as the 6-5, 300-pound Arnfelt posted just seven tackles in five games during 2011. ... A broken foot, which was re-injured at midseason, robbed him of a starting spot and seven full games. ... Made his only start in the bowl game against Texas A&M and delivered a career-high-tying five tackles. ... Coach Pat Fitzgerald says, pound-for-pound, Arnfelt is the strongest player on the team.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Malin Jones

Jones, offered by Notre Dame and many others, ended his recruiting process midway through his junior year. ... He was the first player at fabled Joliet Catholic Academy (13-time state champions) to deliver three 1,000-yard seasons. ... As a senior, he rushed 195 times for 1,681 yards (an 8.6-yard average) and 25 touchdowns. ... Blessed with terrific pass-catching skills, he projects as the complete package for NU's spread offense. ... Delivered an interception in the state title game and could be equally good as a safety.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	25.9	71
Rushing	117.5	95
Passing	286.5	13
Total	404.1	40
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	24.5	55
Rushing	128.6	41
Passing	221.9	68
Total	350.5	47
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 4	+ 0.31	36

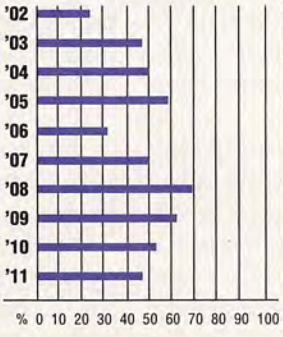
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.4	63
Rushing	155.9	58
Passing	235.2	48
Total	391.1	48
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	29.0	77
Rushing	185.0	92
Passing	241.2	95
Total	426.2	97
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 1	- 0.08	63

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.9	51
Rushing	166.6	45
Passing	254.2	38
Total	420.9	34
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	27.7	66
Rushing	177.3	84
Pass	230.4	71
Total	407.7	80
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 3	+ 0.23	40

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

6-7, 3-5

W	at Boston College	24-17
W	EASTERN ILLINOIS	42-21
L	at Army	14-21
L	at Illinois	35-38
L	MICHIGAN	24-42
L	at Iowa	31-41
L	PENN STATE	24-34
W	at Indiana	59-38
W	at Nebraska	28-25
W	RICE	28-6
W	MINNESOTA	28-13
L	MICHIGAN STATE	17-31
	Meineke Car Care Bowl	
L	vs. Texas A&M	22-33

PLAYER PROFILE

Kain Colter
Photo by Jerry Lai-US PRESSWIRE

Smooth Operator: Colter in Control

Junior quarterback Kain Colter wants to become an orthopedic surgeon after his playing days. Here is how he came to set that goal:

During the first game of his senior year at Cherry Creek (Colo.) High School, Colter tore the labrum and biceps tendon in his throwing arm. Dr. Eric McCarty, the University of Colorado's head team physician and a family friend, performed the surgery to fix Colter's right shoulder.

"He videotaped the surgery and let me watch it," Colter said.

"It was pretty cool to see. After that, I got to go and sit in on two more of his surgeries. It was a real crazy experience, a thing I really enjoyed and got me into it. (Being an orthopedic surgeon) has been the plan ever since."

In the meantime, Colter gets to operate Northwestern's spread offense on a full-time basis.

He started the first three games last season while Dan Persa worked his way back to health. During the final 10 games, Colter lined up primarily at receiver with occasional turns at quarterback — such as when Persa injured his shoulder during the first half of NU's 28-25 upset at No. 9 Nebraska.

Colter threw infrequently in his relief role against the Cornhuskers (4 of 6), but rushed 17 times for 57 yards and two touchdowns to earn Big Ten Offensive Player of the Week honors.

For the year, he led the Wildcats with 654 yards and nine touchdowns on the ground. He completed 55 of 82 passes (67 percent) for 673 yards and six scores, yet still found time to catch 43 passes for 466 passes and three touchdowns. Not bad for a guy who never attended any meetings with the wideouts.

"It felt like it was just in the backyard playing again with your buddies," Colter said.

As much as the Wildcats love his ability to create on the fly, they spent spring ball making him more of a complete quarterback. With so many receivers at his disposal, they'd like him to go through all of his progressions.

"I'd go through one or two last year, but as far as looking back-side and looking for a checkdown, I'd figure I'd just run and get the same yardage," Colter said with a smile.

"This spring when something broke down, I'd try to scramble to pass instead of scramble to run. This year, I feel like I can just distribute the ball and let them (WRs) make plays."

average) thanks to electric junior Venric Mark — and the speedster does a decent job on kick returns as well — but the rest of the units weren't up to snuff.

Junior kicker Jeff Budzien received the green light to try just 10 field goals last year, and he made only six. He was one of four on kicks of 45 yards and beyond.

Junior punter Brandon Williams has been a solid performer for two years, but not spectacular. He dropped 14 punts inside the 20-yard line, but counter-balanced that with nine touchbacks.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Wildcats have ramped up future non-conference schedules as California (2013), Notre Dame (2014) and Stanford (2015) start popping up soon. For now, the Wildcats open with similar BCS teams in Syracuse, Vanderbilt and Boston College.

The Big Ten slate features the same eight foes as last season, which means no Wisconsin and Ohio State. The Wildcats' bye also comes at a fortuitous time as they'll have an extra week to prepare for trips to Michigan and Michigan State.

The Wildcats play at home on four consecutive Saturdays in September (Vandy, BC, South Dakota and Indiana), but the fall quarter doesn't begin until two days before the Indiana game. That means attendance will take an important hit for at least the first two games, but also means the players can focus exclusively on football.

— Lindsey Willhite

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	at Syracuse	5-7
Sept. 8	VANDERBILT	6-7
Sept. 15	BOSTON COLLEGE	4-8
Sept. 22	SOUTH DAKOTA	6-5
Sept. 29	INDIANA	1-11
Oct. 6	at Penn State	9-4
Oct. 13	at Minnesota	3-9
Oct. 20	NEBRASKA	9-4
Oct. 27	IOWA	7-6
Nov. 10	at Michigan	11-2
Nov. 17	at Michigan State	11-3
Nov. 24	ILLINOIS	7-6

KENT STATE | GOLDEN FLASHES

MAC rank: 2 Record: 5-7 MAC record: 4-4 (3rd, East) Stadium: Dix Stadium (25,000)

By Bob Narang

Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

Roosevelt Nix

"Kent State's always had a good defense. If they can move the ball, watch out."
— Opposing MAC assistant coach

GOLDEN FLASHES at a GLANCE

COACH: Darrell Hazel — At Kent State and overall: 5-7, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian Rock
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jon Heacock

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1972
LAST BOWL: 1972, Tangerine
RETURING STARTERS: 18; 9 offense, 8 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Spencer Keith, RB Traylon Durham, WR Tyshon Goode, SR Dri Archer, DT Roosevelt Nix, LB Luke Batton, SS Luke Wollet

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The defense returns most of last year's starters that helped the Golden Flashes stay competitive. Nix is an all-conference player that foes must double-team. The defense could be even better in 2012 with an influx of experienced starters returning.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The instability at quarterback could derail the Golden Flashes. Keith and Fisher are the two main candidates for a position that has been a problem for Kent State for years. Goode and Archer are two players the Golden Flashes are counting on put up some points.

OFFENSE

The Golden Flashes had one of the worst offenses in the country last year, finishing 114th in scoring and 119th in total offense.

The good news is Kent State got better when senior quarterback Spencer Keith bounced back from a dismal showing in the first seven games to put up respectable numbers and help the Golden Flashes win four of their final five games.

Keith, who completed 51.1 percent of his passes in 2011, isn't assured of retaining his starting position for a third straight season, however. Junior college recruit David Fisher had an impressive spring, displaying good leadership skills and athleticism.

Fisher initially struggled adjusting to taking snaps under center after playing in a shotgun offense at Palomar (Calif.) Community College. Fisher overcame a rocky spring start by bringing a new element to the offense with his ability to make plays out of the pocket.

Senior left tackle Brian Winters is the leader of a strong line that returns four starters, including three seniors.

Junior tailback Dri Archer returns to the field after sitting out last year due to academic problems. The speedy Archer can be used in a variety of ways due to his blazing 40-time of 4.3 seconds.

Wide receiver Tyshon Goode, a second-team All-MAC selection in 2010, must build on the promise he showed in his first two seasons.

DEFENSE

Kent State's defense wasn't the problem in 2011. Or the last few years. The Golden Flashes finished in the top three in nearly every major defensive category in the conference last season.

Junior defensive lineman Roosevelt Nix was hampered by an injury early last year, but his production returned by the end of the season. Nix (6-0, 244) combines with end Jake Dooley to form a disruptive duo that should equal or surpass last year's combined 27.5 tackles for losses.

Senior linebackers Luke Batton and C.J. Malauulu, the top two tacklers from a year ago, are a solid pair, but the Golden Flashes lack sufficient depth.

The secondary gets overlooked due to the production from the front seven, but that won't be the case any longer. Free safety Calvin Tiggle, strong safety Luke Wollet and cornerbacks Sidney Saulter and Norman Wolfe all return after posting big numbers last year.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior kicker Freddy Cortez was expected to take on the punting duties, but his status was unknown at the end of spring because of offseason knee surgery. Cortez made 13 of 17 field-goal attempts last season, including all nine inside 40 yards. Archer's return provides an immediate boost to the kick return team.

OVERVIEW

The Golden Flashes have finished with 5-7 records in three straight seasons. Getting over that hump depends on whether the late surge by the offense was a mirage or not. The quarterback issue could pose a problem all season, but Kent State has the tools to put up more points. The defense will be one of the best in the league.

TOP NEWCOMER

QB David Fisher: A rare Kent State recruit from Palomar Community College in Oceanside, Calif., Fisher is athletic but lacks ideal size — 6-0, 215 pounds. Fisher's experience gives him a good shot at playing time as the quarterback position isn't settled.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	3	Spencer Keith*	6-3	221	Sr.
RB	34	Traylon Durham*	6-0	250	So.
WR	8	Matt Hurdle*	6-3	185	Sr.
WR	5	Tyshon Goode*	6-1	185	Sr.
SR	1	Dri Archer	6-1	193	Jr.
TE	42	Tim Erjavec*	6-2	232	Jr.
LT	66	Brian Winters*	6-6	294	Sr.
LG	61	Josh Kline*	6-3	304	Sr.
C	75	Phil Huff	6-3	266	Jr.
RG	70	Tyler Arend*	6-5	295	Jr.
RT	65	Kent Cleveland*	6-4	300	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	47	Mark Fackler	6-4	244	Jr.
DT	5	Roosevelt Nix*	6-0	244	Jr.
NT	6	Dana Brown*	6-1	281	Sr.
DE	51	Jake Dooley*	6-3	238	Sr.
LB	10	Andre Parker	6-1	215	So.
LB	30	Luke Batton*	6-0	224	Sr.
LB	43	C.J. Malauulu*	6-1	235	Sr.
CB	11	Norman Wolfe	5-8	163	Sr.
CB	21	Sidney Saulter*	6-0	178	Sr.
SS	39	Luke Wollet*	6-1	193	Jr.
FS	8	Calvin Tiggle*	5-11	190	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	45	Freddy Cortez*	6-0	200	Sr.
P	92	Andrew Horning	6-1	205	So.

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Aug. 30	Towson
Sept. 8	at Kentucky
Sept. 19/20	at Buffalo
Sept. 29	BALL STATE
Oct. 6	at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 13	at Army
Oct. 20	WESTERN MICHIGAN
Oct. 27	at Rutgers
Nov. 3	AKRON
Nov. 10	at Miami (OH)
Nov. 17	at Bowling Green
Nov. 23	OHIO

2011 RESULTS

L	at Alabama	7-48
L	LOUISIANA	12-20
L	at Kansas State	0-37
W	SOUTH ALABAMA	33-25
L	at Ohio	10-17
L	at Northern Illinois	10-40
L	MIAMI (OH)	3-9
W	BOWLING GREEN	27-15
W	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	24-21
W	at Akron	35-3
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	28-22
L	at Temple	16-34

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	17.1	114
Rushing	108.1	107
Passing	145.4	110
Total	253.5	119

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	24.3	49
Rushing	129.8	35
Passing	196.3	26
Total	326.2	21

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
+12	+1.00	7

OHIO STATE BUCKEYES

For more coverage of the Buckeyes, visit ohiostate.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tom Herman | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Luke Fickell** | **STADIUM: Ohio Stadium: 102,329**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
6-7, 3-5 Big Ten (4th, Leaders)

COACH:
Urban Meyer — At Ohio State: 1st year; overall: 104-23, 10 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
18; 7 offense, 9 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Braxton Miller, RB Jordan Hall, TE Jake Stoneburner, OL Jack Mewhort, DL John Simon, DL Johnathan Hankins, LB Ryan Shazier, CB C.J. Barnett

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The defensive line, anchored by Simon and Hankins, is impressive and should be stout against the run and rushing the passer. The secondary figures to be sterling in coverage. On offense, Meyer's spread suits Miller's skill set at quarterback and Stoneburner's ability as a receiver.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The passing game ranked as one of the nation's worst last season, but will a new spread offense help? Miller has to work on accuracy and decision-making, and his receivers haven't proved to be reliable. The offensive line lacks depth. A dearth of capable linebackers could be problematic.

KEY LOSSES:
RB Dan "Boom" Herron, WR DeVier Posey, LT Mike Adams, C Michael Brewster, LB Andrew Sweat

OVERVIEW:
The Buckeyes aren't eligible for the postseason because of their one-year bowl ban, but there's still plenty to get excited about and ample incentive to atone for last year's 6-7 record, Ohio State's first sub-.500 mark since 1988. Fans can't wait to see Meyer's spread offense in action. He has spent the past few months motivating and challenging his players to compete at a championship level. It begins now.

Meyer Brings Spread Offense, Buzz to Columbus

In the eyes of Ohio State fans, Urban Meyer might be the second coming of Woody Hayes.

Meyer hasn't coached a game for the Buckeyes, but the native Ohioan and OSU grad has generated a buzz around the program that seemingly has everyone talking future Big Ten and national championships.

Of course, that can't happen this season. The NCAA handed down a one-year postseason ban stemming from a memorabilia-for-cash scandal that led to former coach Jim Tressel's departure in May 2011 and player suspensions that handicapped the team last season.

After the Buckeyes finished 6-7 under interim coach Luke Fickell — their first losing season since 1988 — athletic director Gene Smith hired Meyer in late November. Meyer, who led Florida to two BCS titles, has quickly restored faith and hope with a spread offense that should suit the dual-threat ability of sophomore quarterback Braxton Miller.

Add nine returning starters on defense, and there's optimism in Columbus that the Buckeyes can contend in the Big Ten Leaders Division — even though sanctions also restrict them from playing in the conference title game in Indianapolis.

That's not to say the Buckeyes are going to roll right away under Meyer. There's plenty of work to be done before the Sept. 1 opener against Miami (Ohio).

"We identified our issues," Meyer said. "I told them it has to be the best offseason in the history of college football. It has to happen."

Urban's renewal of the program started in January with rigorous, predawn winter conditioning sessions under Mickey Marotti, brought from Florida to be assistant athletic director for football sports performance. By the end of the training program, the Buckeyes' offensive line had lost 455 pounds of fat and added more than 500 pounds of muscle.

"Their bodies are changing a little bit," Meyer said. "Their attitudes are changing. There's a unit being developed there."

The physical transformation helped prepare the players for up-tempo spring practices that had a sense of urgency as Meyer and offensive coordinator Tom Herman began installing a new no-huddle, spread offense like nothing ever seen from an Ohio State team.

On defense, the alterations won't be as dramatic under defensive coordinator Fickell. Stopping opponents should be less of a problem than the Ohio State offense consistently moving the ball.

OFFENSE

Once Meyer fully installs his spread offense, don't expect the Buckeyes to put the ball in the air 50 times a game. He wants to incorporate elements of Ohio State's more traditional power running game with three- and four-receiver sets.

"We're going to be a very balanced offense," Meyer said. "Obviously, if you can't be balanced, you can't win. (Defenses) can stop the run game."

Meyer's objective is to spread the field, allowing the offense to operate in space and create mismatches. He spent the spring trying to identify playmakers to improve the Buckeyes' passing attack, which ranked 115th of 120 FBS teams last season at 127 yards per game.

"We're taking one of the worst passing teams in America a year ago and we've got to find out if we can do that," Meyer said.

"Unfortunately, even after the spring game, I still don't know. Can we throw the ball? I just don't know."

The triggerman will be Braxton

Braxton Miller
Photo by Joe Robbins

Miller, who took over as quarterback in the fourth game last season as a freshman. Miller, a gifted scrambler and runner, led the team in rushing with 715 yards and ran for seven touchdowns.

As a passer, Miller is a work in progress. He completed a respectable 54.1 percent of his throws last year with a 13-4 touchdown-to-interception ratio, but averaged a mere 96.6 yards per game.

Who will be his targets? Given that OSU's top three receivers last season finished with only 14 catches each, Meyer emphasized all winter and spring the need for playmakers to stretch the field — and one could be senior Jordan Hall as a running back/wide receiver.

"Jordan Hall gives us some flexibility," Meyer said. "He's the No. 1 candidate to fill that hybrid position that Percy Harvin made famous (at Florida)."

Receivers Corey "Philly" Brown, Devin Smith and Michael Thomas, a freshman, and tight end Jake Stoneburner are also potential big-play threats, the coach said.

Meyer loves the tenacity of senior fullback Zach Boren. Primarily a blocker throughout his career, Boren could become more of an outlet in the passing game. When the Buckeyes need a power runner, junior Carlos Hyde will fill that role.

The biggest question mark is the offensive line, which lost three starters and lacks depth. Junior Jack Mewhort has moved to left tackle from guard, and Andrew Norwell returns at left guard.

DEFENSE

With the offense attracting so much attention since Meyer's arrival, the Buckeyes' defense has flown under the radar.

But with nine starters returning, and Luke Fickell moving back to defensive coordinator after a year as interim head coach, there's not as much to worry about on that side of the ball. The Buckeyes finished 19th nationally in total defense last season, not quite up to their top-10 norm.

But the potential is there for the "Silver Bullets" to be flying around fast and furious on the field this fall.

"I'd expect our defense to get close to Ohio State's standards real soon," Meyer said at the end of spring drills.

Ohio State expects to keep its 4-3 defense under Fickell, but the defensive staff has changed. Fickell added coaching the linebackers to his coordinator duties; Mike Vrabel switched from linebackers to the defensive line; Everett Withers came on board as co-defensive coordinator and safeties coach after a season as interim head coach at North Carolina; and Kerry Coombs arrived from Cincinnati to handle the cornerbacks.

"We've got some guys who have

C.J. Barnett
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Braxton Miller*	So.	Should thrive in Urban Meyer's spread offense.	Kenny Guiton, Jr.
RB	Jordan Hall	Sr.	Expected to be the team's top playmaker.	Carlos Hyde, Jr.
FB	Zach Boren*	Sr.	Hard-nosed player and leader.	Adam Homan, Sr.
WR	Corey Brown*	Jr.	Experienced receiver counted on to make plays.	Chris Fields, Jr.*
WR	Devin Smith	So.	Tied for team lead in receptions as freshman.	Michael Thomas, Fr.
TE	Jake Stoneburner*	Sr.	Downfield threat with seven TDs last year.	Jeff Heuerman, So.
LT	Jack Mewhort*	Jr.	Emerged as line anchor after moving from guard.	Tommy Brown, Fr.
LG	Andrew Norwell*	Jr.	Returning starter who has played guard, tackle.	Eric Kramer, So.
C	Corey Linsley	Jr.	Secured job with strong winter and spring.	Jacoby Boren, Fr.
RG	Marcus Hall	Jr.	Started five games last season.	Antonio Underwood, So.
RT	Reid Fragel	Sr.	Moved over from tight end.	Taylor Decker, Fr.
K	Drew Basil*	Jr.	Made 16 of 19 FG attempts in 2011.	Russell Doup, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	John Simon*	Sr.	Third-team All-American last year.	J.T. Moore, So.
DT	Johnathan Hankins*	Jr.	An NFL-style force inside; had 11 TFLs in 2011.	Michael Bennett, So.
DT	Garrett Goebel*	Sr.	Started all 13 games last season.	Joel Hale, So.
DE	Adam Bellamy*	Jr.	Competitive position will be a strength.	Nathan Williams, Sr.
LB	Ryan Shazier	So.	Registered 15 tackles last year vs. Penn State.	Luke Roberts, Fr.
LB	Curtis Grant	So.	Skills began clicking in spring ball.	Storm Klein, Sr.*
LB	Etienne Sabino	Sr.	Veteran presence in young linebacker group.	Conner Crowell, Fr.
CB	Bradley Roby*	So.	He's the Buckeyes' best cover corner.	Adam Griffin, So.
CB	Travis Howard*	Sr.	Quick and physical as a defender.	Doran Grant, So.
S	Christian Bryant*	Jr.	Playmaker with good instincts; eight PBUs in '11.	Corey Brown, Jr.
S	C.J. Barnett*	Jr.	Led team in tackles last year with 75.	Orhian Johnson, Sr.
P	Ben Buchanan*	Sr.	Consistent in the past two seasons.	Kevin Niehoff, Fr.

*Returning Starter

BUCKEYES RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Noah Spence
Ohio State's defensive end position is likely to have some youthful flair in the next couple years, and the 6-4, 245-pound Spence is one of those expected to see the field early and often. The nation's top-ranked weakisde defensive end in the 2012 class, Spence is an explosive pass rusher.

Adolphus Washington
Throughout his high school career at Cincinnati's Taft High School, Adolphus Washington spent his off-seasons playing high school and AAU basketball. When the 6-4, 245-pound defensive end is able to spend an entire year focusing on football, he should quickly develop into one of the Big Ten's most dominant defensive ends.

Bri'onte Dunn
When Urban Meyer was hired at Ohio State, the 6-2, 215-pound Dunn wondered how a big back would fit into Meyer's brand of the spread offense. He was sold when Meyer told him Tim Tebow filled the role of the big back in his offense at Florida, and all Tebow did was win a Heisman.

THE SLEEPER

Najee Murray
When he was offered, and accepted, a scholarship from the Ohio State University at its summer camp before his senior year, many Buckeye fans wondered if it was a little early to go after a lightly recruited in-state prospect. The bone-jarring collisions on his senior highlight film, however, quickly endeared him to the Buckeye faithful.

Committments	25
Average Stars	3.72
★★★★★	2
★★★★☆	14
★★★☆☆	9
★★☆☆☆	0
Total Stars	93
National Rank: 4	Big Ten: 1

2013 NEEDS: The Buckeyes were able to woo 6-8, 313-pound Taylor Decker away from a Notre Dame commitment and 6-6, 315-pound Kyle Dodson from a Wisconsin commitment late in the 2012 class, but still have long term depth concerns at offensive tackle. Also look for them to find a quarterback for those offensive tackles to protect. They are bringing in 6-5, 217-pound passer Cardale Jones – a holdover from the 2011 class who went to prep school – but the Buckeyes do not have an obvious heir apparent to Braxton Miller on the roster.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Warren Ball	RB	6-2	200	★★★★	Columbus, OH	St. Francis DeSales
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 16 running back...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
De'van Bogard	DB	5-11	172	★★★★	Cleveland, OH	Glenville Academic Campus
Rated as the No. 16 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 14 safety...Had 91 tackles, four sacks and two interceptions as a senior.						
Jacoby Boren	OL	6-3	283	★★★	Pickerington, OH	Central
Rated as the No. 50 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 37 offensive guard...Enrolled at Ohio State in January.						
Taylor Decker	OL	6-7	310	★★★★	Vandalia, OH	Butler
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 14 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 23 offensive tackle.						
Kyle Dodson	OL	6-6	315	★★★★	Cleveland, OH	Cleveland Heights
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 16 offensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Bri'onte Dunn	RB	6-1	214	★★★★	Canton, OH	Glenoak
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 11 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 6 running back...Selected to participate in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl...Enrolled at Ohio State in January.						
Pat Elflein	OL	6-3	285	★★★	Pickerington, OH	Pickerington North
Chose Ohio State over offfers from Akron, Bowling Green, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Indiana, Miami (Ohio), Northwestern, Purdue and Toledo.						
Frank Epitropoulos	WR	6-3	195	★★★	Upper Arlington, OH	Upper Arlington
Rated as the No. 31 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 77 wide receiver.						
Cardale Jones	QB	6-5	226	★★★	Fork Union, VA	Fork Union Military Academy
Rated as the nation's No. 12 prep school prospect by Rivals.com...Originally signed with Ohio State out of high school in 2011.						
Jamal Marcus	LB	6-2	230	★★★	Durham, NC	Hillside
Rated as the No. 15 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 32 outside linebacker.						
Najee Murray	DB	5-11	172	★★★★	Steubenville, OH	Steubenville
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 safety.						
Joey O'Connor	OL	6-4	295	★★★★	Windsor, CO	Windsor
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Colorado...Rated as the nation's No. 12 offensive tackle...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game.						
David Perkins	ATH	6-2	225	★★★★	South Bend, IN	Washington
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Indiana...Rated as the nation's No. 13 athlete.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Josh Perry	LB	6-4	231	★★★★	Galena, OH	Olentangy
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 11 outside linebacker...Enrolled at Ohio State in January.						
Se'Von Pittman	DE	6-3	259	★★★★	Canton, OH	McKinley
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 8 weakside defensive end...Participated in the Offense-Defense All-American Bowl.						
Tyvis Powell	DB	6-3	194	★★★	Bedford, OH	Bedford
Rated as the No. 33 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 33 cornerback...Enrolled at Ohio State in January.						
Armani Reeves	DB	5-9	185	★★★★	West Roxbury, MA	Catholic Memorial
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Massachusetts...Rated as the nation's No. 17 cornerback.						
Luke Roberts	LB	6-1	226	★★★	Lancaster, OH	Lancaster
Chose Ohio State over Arizona, Bowling Green, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Indiana, Kent State, Ohio and Purdue.						
Tommy Schutt	DT	6-3	301	★★★★	Glen Ellyn, IL	Glenbard West
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 6 defensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Ricquan Southward	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Lakeland, FL	Lakeland
Rated as the No. 60 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 60 wide receiver.						
Noah Spence	DE	6-4	245	★★★★★	Harrisburg, PA	Bishop McDevitt
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Pennsylvania...Rated as the nation's No. 1 weakside defensive end...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game.						
Blake Thomas	TE	6-4	240	★★★	Westlake, OH	St. Ignatius
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 tight end.						
Michael Thomas	WR	6-2	193	★★★★	Fork Union, VA	Fork Union Military Academy
Rated as the nation's No. 4 prep school prospect by Rivals.com ...Enrolled at Ohio State in January.						
Adolphus Washington	DE	6-4	245	★★★★★	Cincinnati, OH	Taft
Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 2 weakside defensive end...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Camren Williams	LB	6-2	215	★★★★	West Roxbury, MA	Catholic Memorial
Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Massachusetts...Rated as the nation's No. 8 inside linebacker.						

BUCKEYES SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
76	Darryl Baldwin	DL	6-6	292	So.	Solon
4	C.J. Barnett	DB	6-1	202	Jr.	Dayton
24	Drew Basil	P/K	6-2	210	Jr.	Chillicothe
93	Adam Bellamy	DL	6-4	292	Jr.	Aurora
63	Michael Bennett	DL	6-3	277	So.	Centerville
98	Logan Beougher	DL	6-3	263	Fr.	Alexandria, VA
64	Ivon Blackman	OL	6-3	310	Jr.	Bedford
51	Brian Bobek	OL	6-2	275	So.	Inverness, IL
50	Jacoby Boren	OL	6-2	283	Fr.	Pickerington
44	Zach Boren	FB	6-1	246	Sr.	Pickerington
56	Dalton Britt	DL	6-2	295	Sr.	Bellville
10	Corey Brown	WR	6-0	186	Jr.	Upper Darby, PA
3	Corey Brown	DB	6-1	197	Jr.	Monroeville, PA
55	Tommy Brown	OL	6-4	310	Fr.	Akron
2	Christian Bryant	DB	5-10	190	Jr.	Cleveland
17	Ben Buchanan	P/K	5-11	190	Sr.	Westerville
88	Derek Burkholder	TE	6-6	230	So.	Massilon
72	Chris Carter	OL	6-4	358	Fr.	Cleveland
39	Kyle Clinton	K	6-1	212	So.	Dublin
36	Connor Crowell	LB	6-1	233	Fr.	Waldorf, MD
68	Taylor Decker	OL	6-7	310	Fr.	Vandalia
16	Zach Domicone	DB	6-2	216	Sr.	Beavercreek
20	Russell Doup	K	6-2	183	So.	Mt. Vernon
25	Bri'onte Dunn	RB	6-1	214	Fr.	Canton
57	Chase Farris	DL	6-4	286	Fr.	Elyria
80	Chris Fields	WR	6-0	197	Jr.	Painesville
77	Reid Fragel	OL	6-8	298	Sr.	Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
53	Garrett Goebel	DL	6-4	285	Sr.	Villa Park, IL
14	Curtis Grant	LB	6-3	235	So.	Richmond, VA
12	Doran Grant	DB	5-11	188	So.	Akron
9	Adam Griffin	DB	5-8	180	So.	Columbus
13	Ken Guiton	QB	6-3	206	Jr.	Houston, TX
87	Peter Gwilym	WR	6-1	192	Fr.	Freeport, ME
51	Joel Hale	DT	6-4	295	So.	Greenwood, IN
7	Jordan Hall	RB	5-9	198	Sr.	Jeannette, PA
79	Marcus Hall	OL	6-6	317	Jr.	Cleveland
52	Johnathan Hankins	DL	6-4	317	Jr.	Dearborn Heights, MI
86	Kenny Hayes	DL	6-5	285	Fr.	Toledo
41	Bryce Haynes	LS	6-4	209	Fr.	Cumming, GA
86	Jeff Heuerman	TE	6-6	247	So.	Naples, FL
49	Adam Homan	RB	6-3	245	Sr.	Coldwater
7	Travis Howard	DB	6-1	196	Sr.	Miami, FL
34	Carlos Hyde	RB	6-0	235	Jr.	Naples, FL
19	Orhian Johnson	DB	6-3	210	Sr.	St. Petersburg, FL
12	Cardale Jones	QB	6-5	226	Fr.	Cleveland
85	Frank Kangah	WR	6-0	190	Fr.	Euclid
32	Storm Klein	LB	6-3	242	Sr.	Newark
69	Eric Kramer	OL	6-4	285	So.	Cincinnati
71	Corey Linsley	OL	6-3	292	Jr.	Youngstown
56	George Makridis	LS	6-2	225	Jr.	Warren
97	Claudius Mbemba	DL	6-2	235	Fr.	Lewis Center
91	William McCary	DL	6-1	234	Sr.	Carrollton, TX
74	Jack Mewhort	OL	6-6	310	Jr.	Toledo
5	Braxton Miller	QB	6-2	210	So.	Huber Heights
88	Steve Miller	DL	6-3	255	So.	Canton
50	J.T. Moore	DL	6-3	250	So.	Youngstown
26	Kevin Niehoff	P	6-3	196	Fr.	Mason
78	Andrew Norwell	OL	6-6	304	Jr.	Cincinnati
19	Ross Oltorik	QB	6-1	223	Sr.	Cincinnati
15	Joshua Perry	LB	6-4	231	Fr.	Lewis Center
35	Vincent Petrella	DB	5-11	173	Sr.	Blacklick
11	Se'Von Pittman	DL	6-3	259	Fr.	Canton
23	Tyvis Powell	DB	6-3	196	Fr.	Bedford
48	Andy Reed	LB	6-2	231	Jr.	Canton
9	Verlon Reed	WR	6-1	200	So.	Columbus
29	Taylor Rice	DB	5-10	185	Sr.	Dublin
42	Luke Roberts	LB	6-1	226	Fr.	Lancaster
25	Bradley Roby	DB	5-11	190	So.	Suwanee, GA
84	Ryan Ross	WR	5-11	190	So.	Akron
6	Etienne Sabino	LB	6-3	237	Sr.	North Miami Beach, FL
33	Nik Sarac	DB	5-9	180	Fr.	Cleveland
82	Kyle Schuck	TE	6-2	222	So.	Selinsgrove, PA
10	Ryan Shazier	LB	6-1	226	So.	Plantation, FL
17	Justin Siems	QB	6-2	212	Sr.	Charlotte, NC
54	John Simon	DL	6-2	270	Sr.	Youngstown
15	Devin Smith	WR	6-1	196	So.	Massillon
2	Rod Smith	RB	6-3	230	So.	Fort Wayne, IN
59	Stewart Smith	DL	6-3	230	Sr.	New Albany
16	Evan Spencer	WR	6-2	205	So.	Vernon Hills, IL
66	Ben St. John	OL	6-3	277	So.	Elmore
96	Kharim Stephens	DL	6-2	280	Sr.	St. Alban, NY
11	Jake Stoneburner	TE	6-5	245	Sr.	Dublin
28	Ron Tanner	DB	6-0	192	Fr.	Columbus
83	Michael Thomas	WR	6-2	193	Fr.	Los Angeles, CA
70	Tim Trummer	OL	6-1	283	Fr.	Kettering
73	Antonio Underwood	OL	6-2	301	So.	Shaker Heights
13	Julian Vann	DB	5-10	178	So.	Lithonia, GA
81	Nick Vannett	TE	6-6	248	Fr.	Westerville
43	Nathan Williams	DL	6-3	249	Sr.	Washington C.H.
18	Tyrone Williams	WR	6-6	229	So.	East Cleveland
32	Darryl Wood	RB	5-9	247	So.	Columbus
21	Jamie Wood	DB	6-1	207	Jr.	Pickerington

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Miller	12	138.4	85	157	4	54.1	1159	13	54	96.6
J. Bauserman	6	111.4	40	86	1	46.5	492	5	36	82.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Smith	13	14	294	21.0	4	40	22.6
C. Brown	23	14	205	14.6	1	54	8.9
J. Stoneburner	12	14	193	13.8	7	36	16.1

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
B. Miller	12	159	951	236	715	4.5	7	81	59.6
D. Herron	8	134	718	43	675	5.0	3	57	84.4
C. Hyde	13	106	578	12	566	5.3	6	63	43.5

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: C.J. Barnett 75, A. Sweat 72, C. Bryant 68
Tackles for loss: J. Simon 16, J. Hankins 11, E. Sabino 6.5
Sacks: J. Simon 7, J. Hankins 3, R. Shazier 3, M. Bennett 3
Interceptions: B. Roby 3, O. Johnson 3, two tied with 2

NOTEBOOK

No matter how many wins Ohio State racks up this season, the seniors won't get to finish their careers with the Big Ten Championship Game or a bowl. They'll pay the price for a one-year postseason ban as a result of NCAA sanctions from the illegal-benefits scandal that rocked the program in 2011.

The last time the Buckeyes didn't go to a bowl was after the 1999 season.

With Ohio State having no postseason to play for, coach **Urban Meyer** admitted that motivation concerns him. The players, particularly the seniors, see every game as a bowl and are focused on ending with a win over Michigan on Nov. 24.

"There's a lot of play for," offensive tackle **Jack Mewhort** said. "When people say there's not, it's just ridiculous."

• Meyer provided a glimpse of his motivational tactics when he gathered the team at midfield before the April 21 spring game for a circle drill that matched teammate against teammate.

The players, coaches and fans loved it. They went crazy when Meyer sent quarterbacks **Braxton Miller** and **Kenny Guiton** into the ring to square off.

"It was fun. It was competitive. It got the crowd into it," Miller said. "We were just laughing at each other, like, 'Are we really in the circle drill together?' That's crazy."

Meyer said, "Our quarterbacks are like anybody else; you've got to go put your nose on people. You've got to be very careful and very smart. Sometimes I've been accused of neither. I think that's fun for the fans. I know the players came out of their shoes a little bit."

• Early-arriving freshman center **Jacoby Boren** opted for surgery to repair a torn labrum suffered in high school. Coaches decided he should have the procedure in April, in hopes of Boren being recovered by August. He had worked his way up to the No. 2 center spot.

• Meyer will continue Ohio State's postgame ritual of players singing the school's alma mater. Former coach Jim Tressel started it, and Meyer said he's a big fan of tradition.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"For the expectations in Columbus, I think Urban Meyer has a lot of work to do. When you talk about Ohio State, you're always talking championships. So, when I go watch them, I'm thinking, 'OK, what's this team compared to the one that one six Big Ten championships in a row (from 2005 to 2010)?' They have a ways to go.

"When I first saw Braxton Miller, I thought he had the potential to be a better quarterback than Terrelle Pryor. I still feel that way. With Tim Tebow at Florida, Urban wound up in the spread but they ran a lot of downhill runs with Tebow. It was the old Ohio State gap scheme, actually. I think Braxton throws the ball better than he's given credit for and it will be interesting to see how they use him in the run game. Will it be a power run game or a finesse option run game?"

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Carlos Hyde
Photo By Joe Robbins

played some snaps in this defense," Withers said. "They have an understanding, so it's just a matter of working and improving fundamentally."

Senior Garrett Goebel makes up part of a well-stocked front four that includes senior John Simon and junior Johnathan Hankins, a top-notch NFL prospect who proved difficult to block last season and looked even better during the spring after dropping about 20 pounds during winter conditioning.

Returning starting tackle Adam Bellamy could slide to end, and sophomore Michael Bennett has position flexibility, too. Former starter Nathan Williams is projected to be back after a knee injury ended his 2011 season in the opener. He has 21.5 career tackles for loss.

Add true freshmen Noah Spence, Adolphus Washington, Se'Von Pittman and Tommy Schutt, and the defensive line gains even greater depth.

Linebacker is a different story. The experience is minimal beyond the top four of Etienne Sabino, Storm Klein, Ryan Shazier and Curtis Grant. An opportunity could be waiting for one or more of the freshmen on the roster. Sabino made 62 tackles last season, including 6.5 for loss.

The secondary should be set, with returning starters Bradley Roby and Travis Howard at cornerback, and C.J. Barnett and Christian Bryant at safety. Orhian Johnson has started games at safety, and sophomore Doran Grant will be the third cornerback.

Roby and Johnson tied for the team lead last season with three interceptions. Having a veteran group should allow for a more aggressive unit.

"We're going to have more chances for interceptions," Roby said.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Drew Basil took over placekicking duties last season. After a rocky start — he missed his first two field-goal attempts — Basil finished 16 of 19, including 10 of 10 inside the 40-yard line. His .842 field-goal percentage led the Big Ten.

Basil's one failed PAT in 37 tries cost the Buckeyes a win at Purdue. The Boilermakers blocked a potential tiebreaking extra point in the final seconds and then won in overtime.

Senior Ben Buchanan enters his third year as the punter. He's steady, averag-

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DL John Simon

Third-team AP All-America pick and All-Big Ten player last season as a junior. ... Fierce pass rusher who led the team with seven sacks and 16 tackles for loss, ranking in the top six in the Big Ten in both categories. "Other than him, I don't know who we have as a pass rusher," coach Urban Meyer said. ... Is considered one of the strongest players in college football. ... Entering his third year as a starter. ... Has made 108 career tackles.

EMERGING STAR

QB Braxton Miller

Became the starter in the fourth game last season and literally ran with the opportunity, leading the team in rushing with 715 yards. ... Gained 100 yards or more on the ground in a game three times. ... Named Big Ten Freshman of the Year and National Freshman Performer of the Year by the College Football Performance Awards organization. ... Threw winning 40-yard touchdown pass against Wisconsin with 20 seconds left. ... Set a freshman school record with 13 TD passes.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Michael Thomas

Freshman who enrolled for winter quarter and impressed coaches with his work ethic and dedication. ... Had a breakout spring game with 12 receptions for 131 yards. ... Los Angeles native who played one year at Fort Union (Va.) Military Academy and roomed there with quarterback Cardale Jones, also an Ohio State freshman. ... Caught 86 passes for 1,756 yards and 21 touchdowns as a high school senior in California. ... Nephew of former NFL standout Keyshawn Johnson.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.0	49
Rushing	195.4	18
Passing	173.6	103
Total	369.0	68
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	12.5	5
Rushing	90.8	7
Passing	171.5	13
Total	262.3	5
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 17	+ 1.31	5

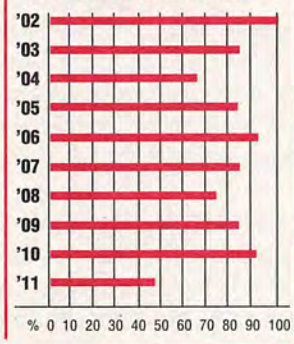
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	38.8	11
Rushing	220.1	14
Passing	228.5	54
Total	448.6	20
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	14.3	5
Rushing	96.7	3
Passing	165.5	8
Total	262.2	4
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 15	+ 1.15	4

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	24.5	81
Rushing	191.2	27
Passing	127.0	115
Total	318.2	107
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.0	27
Rushing	141.5	50
Pass	182.0	14
Total	323.5	19
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.38	30

10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS

6-7, 3-5

W	AKRON	42-0
W	TOLEDO	27-22
L	at Miami	6-24
W	COLORADO	37-17
L	MICHIGAN STATE	7-10
L	at Nebraska	27-34
W	at Illinois	17-7
W	WISCONSIN	33-29
W	INDIANA	34-20
L	at Purdue (OT)	23-26
L	PENN STATE	14-20
L	at Michigan	34-40
	Gator Bowl	
L	vs. Florida	17-24

PLAYER PROFILE

John Simon
Photo by Joe Robbins

OSU Set to Unleash 'Warhorse' Tackle

During April's spring game, John Simon paced up and down the sideline like a caged tiger waiting to be set free in the wild.

New Ohio State coach Urban Meyer wouldn't let Simon come out to play. The senior defensive tackle was simply too overpowering for the offensive line to handle.

It was that way much of the spring. The offense couldn't get much accomplished in practice because Simon was always manhandling blockers and disrupting plays. He simply couldn't be stopped.

And so he had to wait for his turn in the fall. By then, Simon will be more than ready to frustrate opposing offenses.

Meyer hasn't stopped gushing about Simon, calling him a warrior in the weight room, a respected team leader and a student of the game. Two years ago, Simon was ranked No. 8 on a list compiled by ESPN.com of college football's workout freaks.

Defensive coordinator Luke Fickell and Meyer rave about Simon's high-revving motor — he never takes a play off or loses his intensity. His resiliency is reflected in his streak of 26 consecutive starts.

"The guy that's just the warhorse — he is Ohio State football — that's John Simon," Meyer said. "I can't help but say I love the guy. He's Tebowish as far as his commitment. ... His passion for Ohio State University is unmatched."

That's high praise coming from Meyer, who coached quarterback Tim Tebow at Florida and puts Simon in a rare breed of players he has worked with through the years.

Meyer already has guaranteed that Simon will be a captain this season, regardless of the players' vote.

"It's a great honor for everything he says about me," Simon said. "But we've got a lot of guys on this team who deserve that honor as well."

Simon distinguished himself last year with a team-leading seven sacks (fifth-highest total in the Big Ten) and 16 tackles for loss. He was named first-team All-Big Ten by the coaches and third-team All-American by the Associated Press.

Some pro scouts call Simon a tweener. At 6-2, 260, he is considered undersized to play defensive tackle and lacks the height of a prototypical defensive end. That won't stop him from being a terror his senior season, coaches said.

Defensive line coach Mike Vrabel, a three-time Super Bowl champion, has worked with Simon on technique and using his hands.

Vrabel's comments about Simon echo those from around the program.

"I love being around him," Vrabel said.

ing 41.3 and 41.0 yards in the past two seasons. Of his 70 punts last year, 27 landed inside the 20-yard line.

Jordan Hall is the team's top returner. He was fifth in the Big Ten in kickoff returns with a 26.3-yard average and sixth in punt returns (5.8 yards per attempt).

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Buckeyes won't have to leave home for their four non-conference games, and that should help the Meyer era get off to a good start. The middle two games against Central Florida (Sept. 8) and California (Sept. 15) should be the most challenging, with Cal the only OSU non-league foe to play in a bowl game last season or finish with a winning record.

Ohio State opens Big Ten play at formidable Michigan Sate on Sept. 29. The Spartans are one of the favorites to win the Legends Division, but the Buckeyes own a 13-5 all-time record in East Lansing and haven't lost there since 1999.

Then the Buckeyes come right back the following Saturday to confront Nebraska in a prime-time night game at Ohio Stadium. The Cornhuskers, who beat the Buckeyes last fall in Lincoln, will make their first trip to Columbus since 1956.

The schedule concludes with a road game against defending Big Ten champion Wisconsin on Nov. 17 and a home matchup with arch-enemy Michigan on Nov. 24.

— Doug Bean

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	MIAMI (OH)	4-8
Sept. 8	UCF	5-7
Sept. 15	CALIFORNIA	7-6
Sept. 22	UAB	3-9
Sept. 29	at Michigan State	11-3
Oct. 6	NEBRASKA	9-4
Oct. 13	at Indiana	1-11
Oct. 20	PURDUE	7-6
Oct. 27	at Penn State	9-4
Nov. 3	ILLINOIS	7-6
Nov. 17	at Wisconsin	11-3
Nov. 24	MICHIGAN	11-2

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PENN STATE NITTANY LIONS

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OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Bill O'Brien | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ted Roof** | **STADIUM: Beaver Stadium: 107,282**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
9-4 overall, 6-2 Big Ten (T-1st, Leaders)

COACH:
Bill O'Brien — At Penn State and overall: 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS:
10; 4 offense, 4 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Silas Redd, WR Justin Brown, C Matt Stankiewitch, DT Jordan Hill, LB Gerald Hodges, LB Michael Mauti, K/P Anthony Fera

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
Redd is one of the best running backs in the Big Ten. The tight ends could be very productive in O'Brien's offense. Headlined by Hill and Mauti, the front seven should lead the defense again. Fera is one of the Big Ten's best kickers and punters.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
No quarterback was able to separate himself in the three-man race during spring practice. The offensive line lost all but one starter, and the secondary lost all four. Adjusting to new schemes on offense and defense might take some time.

KEY LOSSES:
WR Derek Moye, DT Devon Still, DE Jack Crawford, S Nick Sukay

OVERVIEW:
O'Brien brings a pro-style offense to Penn State and has a feature back in Redd, but much depends on the quarterback position and the development of the offensive line. The defense will be strong, but that might not be good enough for the Lions to challenge for the Leaders Division title.

New Era for Penn State Begins Under O'Brien

Bill O'Brien took on two monumental challenges when he accepted Penn State's offer to become the new head coach in January.

He's succeeding the late Joe Paterno, whose teams won 409 games and two national titles in his 46 seasons as head coach and who was on the coaching staff since 1950.

O'Brien also is trying to move the Penn State program forward after the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal rocked the university and led to the firing of Paterno last November.

"I'm not here to be Joe Paterno," O'Brien said upon his hiring. "There's only one Joe Paterno. What I'm going to try to do is be Bill O'Brien. We're going to do the best we can to continue the success that he had here for many, many years.

"We're going to move forward to a new era of Penn State football."

The 42-year-old O'Brien spent the previous five seasons as an assistant coach with the New England Patriots, serving as quarterbacks coach from 2009 to 2011 and offensive coordinator last season. He also worked 14 years as a college assistant at Georgia Tech, Maryland and Duke.

O'Brien signed a five-year contract worth $2.3 million per year with performance bonuses up to another $200,000 per year. He revamped the coaching staff, keeping only defensive line coach Larry Johnson and linebackers coach Ron Vanderlinden from Paterno's assistants.

"In organizing his staff, I think he went with people he had been in the foxhole with," said offensive line coach Mac McWhorter, who worked with O'Brien at Georgia Tech. "He knew how they would be under fire. He knew what kind of recruiters they would be. He knew what kind of people they are."

The Penn State players endured much controversy and distraction after the scandal broke in November, but they seemed to be receptive to the coaching changes.

"It's been fun for us," senior linebacker Michael Mauti said.

"Coach O'Brien is very intense and he knows what he wants. He brings a lot of energy. It's exciting for us. Our team is behind him 100 percent. He showed he's ready to take us to the next level. We're excited about where we're heading."

O'Brien said he was pleased with how the players responded in the spring to the new coaches and the new schemes.

"I enjoy being around these guys and coaching them," he said. "They're good kids and they care about football. I'm really proud to be the head coach here."

OFFENSE

O'Brien made it a point not to look at tape or film of the Penn State offense after he was hired.

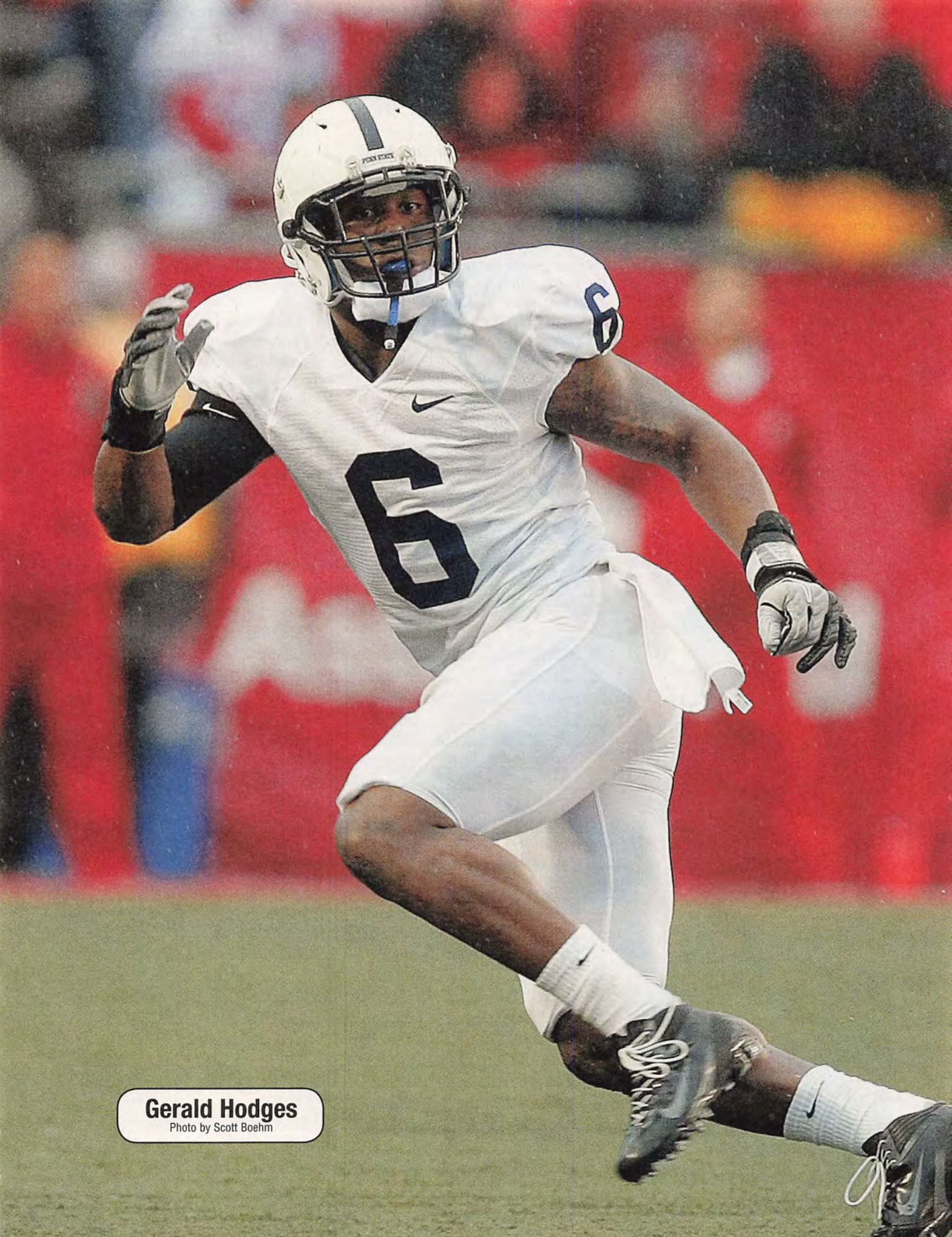
Perhaps for good reason. Last season, the Nittany Lions finished in the bottom three of the Big Ten in total offense, scoring and pass efficiency.

Out of 120 Football Bowl Subdivision teams, Penn State finished 95th in total offense, 96th in passing, 110th in scoring and 112th in pass efficiency.

"I wanted to start with a clean slate," O'Brien said. "I didn't want to make any judgments not knowing the (past) scheme."

He's brought a pro-style offense to State College, the same offense the New England Patriots used to be the third-highest scoring team in the NFL last season.

But he has the same problem Penn State has had the last two seasons: find-



Gerald Hodges
Photo by Scott Boehm

ing a quarterback.

Matt McGloin, Rob Bolden and Paul Jones competed for the No. 1 position, but O'Brien wasn't ready to name a starter or even the top two at the end of spring practice.

"We have to let it soak in a little bit," he said. "Then we'll make a decision heading into training camp about who we're going with or who the top two are."

McGloin was the most effective quarterback for Penn State in the past two seasons, but he threw 14 interceptions (just five in 2011) in that span. Jones seems to be the most intriguing candidate, but he missed the last two seasons because of academic issues.

Bolden began 2010 and 2011 as the starter, but he completed just 39 percent of his passes last season and threw for only two touchdowns, with seven interceptions.

"I want to see them improve their decision-making, their accuracy and their grasp of the offense," O'Brien said. "Then it'll be easier to make a decision."

He has no decision to make at running back. Silas Redd returns after rushing for 1,241 yards in 2011. Redd worked on his speed, strength, blocking and pass-catching in the spring in order to become a more complete back.

Justin Brown and Devon Smith return at wide receiver, but sophomore Allen Robinson made the most progress in the spring and could see a lot of time. Tight ends Garry Gilliam, Kevin Haplea and Jesse James are expected to be busy in O'Brien's offense.

Center Matt Stankiewitch is the only returning starter on the line, but left tackle Adam Gress received much praise from the coaches for his work in the weight room and on the field.

"I'm really excited about the offense," Gilliam said. "It's obviously a lot different. There are a lot of new things we haven't done before. We're excited to learn and see what it has in store for us."

DEFENSE

New defensive coordinator Ted Roof and his players threw around the phrase "multiply aggressive defense" throughout the spring.

That means the Nittany Lions will employ a high-risk, high-reward defensive scheme, a departure from their former philosophy of bend, but don't break.

"Coach Roof likes to take more risks," linebacker Glenn Carson said. "I think we're gonna blitz a lot more. It's a real fun defense."

Roof didn't have much fun as the defensive coordinator last season at Auburn, where the Tigers finished 81st in the nation in total defense. They allowed 408 total yards per game, the most in school history.

Michael Mauti
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Matt McGloin	Sr.	Holds the advantage in experience.	P. Jones, So.; R Bolden, Jr.*
TB	Silas Redd*	Jr.	Had five straight 100-yard games in October.	Bill Belton, So.
FB	Michael Zordich	Sr.	Ferocious blocker has five career touchdowns.	Zach Zwinak, So.
WR	Justin Brown*	Sr.	Has just three TD catches in last two seasons.	Allen Robinson, So.
WR	Devon Smith	Sr.	Part-time starter; team's fastest and shortest player.	Shawney Kersey, Jr.
TE	Garry Gilliam	Jr.	Has been out the past 1 1/2 years with knee issues.	Kevin Haplea, Jr.
LT	Adam Gress	Jr.	Increased strength, stamina will help.	Nate Cadogan, Jr.
LG	Miles Dieffenbach	So.	Highly rated center switches positions.	Eric Shrive, Jr.
C	Matt Stankiewitch*	Sr.	Emerged as a team leader in spring.	Ty Howle, Jr.
RG	John Urschel	Jr.	Earned mathematics degree in three years.	Anthony Alosi, Fr.
RT	Donovan Smith	Fr.	Lions' most promising young lineman.	Mike Farrell, Sr.
PK	Anthony Fera*	Jr.	Made 14 of 17 field-goal attempts, long of 46.	Sam Ficken, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
LE	Sean Stanley*	Sr.	Has been a disruptive pass rusher at times.	Deion Barnes, Fr.
LT	Jordan Hill*	Sr.	Had eight TFLs in his first season as a starter.	Evan Hailes, So.
RT	DaQuan Jones	Jr.	Space eater can stop the run.	James Terry, Sr.
RE	Pete Massaro	Sr.	Coming back from knee surgery.	C.J. Olaniyan, So.
LB	Michael Mauti	Sr.	Talented, but has had two knee injuries.	Mike Yancich, Sr.
LB	Glenn Carson*	Jr.	Looks to become an impact player.	Mike Hull, So.
LB	Gerald Hodges*	Sr.	Best defensive player on the team.	Khairi Fortt, Jr.
LC	Curtis Drake	Jr.	Ex-wide receiver moves to defense.	Derrick Thomas, Jr.
RC	Stephon Morris	Sr.	Most experienced player in secondary.	Mike Wallace, Jr.
SS	Malcolm Willis	Jr.	Has been a very effective player as a reserve.	Jacob Fagnano, Sr.
FS	Adrian Amos	So.	Has flown under radar until now.	S. Obeng-Agyapong, Jr.
P	Anthony Fera*	Jr.	Dropped 18 punts inside the 20.	Alex Butterworth, Jr.

*Returning Starter

NITTANY LIONS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Eugene Lewis
When he stuck with an earlier pledge to Penn State following November's scandal in Happy Valley, Lewis became the face of the Nittany Lions' 2012 class. He is also their highest ranked signee, checking in at No. 141 in the country and No. 22 in the country at the wide receiver position.

Jamil Pollard
All the tools are there for the 6-5, 280-pound Pollard to develop into a dominant interior defensive lineman for the Nittany Lions. His heart and motor have never been questioned either, so the Westville, N.J., native is a low- risk, high-reward prospect – exactly the sort Bill O'Brien needs early in his tenure.

Nyeem Wartman
Wartman was a prospect Penn State knew very early in the process they wanted, offering midway through his junior year of high school. The 6-3, 220-pound prospect has the ability to play on the inside or outside in college, and should prove valuable with six of the Nittany Lions' top linebackers being upperclassman in 2012.

THE SLEEPER

Da'Quan Davis
At a position where speed and agility are more important than size, the 5-11, 172-pound Davis has the tools to be a lock-down cover corner in the Big Ten. He is very fluid turning and running with wide receivers and has the make-up speed to make sure he is not beat deep.

Committments	19
Average Stars	2.79
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	2
★★★☆☆	11
★★☆☆☆	6
Total Stars	53
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 7

2013 NEEDS: Each first-year head coach has that one position they feel is most important to the success of the team, and as such that is where they put their primary emphasis when they enter their first full recruiting season. Having just come from the offensive coordinator role in New England where his teams were led by future Hall-of-Famer Tom Brady at quarterback, expect Bill O'Brien to make securing his quarterback of the future priority No. 1 on 2013.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Steven Bench	QB	6-3	206	★★★	Cairo, GA	Cairo
Passed for 11 touchdowns and rushed for nine scores as a senior…Threw six touchdowns and ran for four more as a junior.						
Da'Quan Davis	DB	5-11	172	★★	Towson, MD	Calvert Hall
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com… Had 48 tackles, four interceptions and four forced fumbles as a senior.						
Derek Dowrey	DT	6-3	279	★★	Winchester, VA	John Handley
Recorded 107 tackles and 13.5 sacks as a senior…Had 145 tackles and 11 sacks as a junior…Had 128 tackles and nine sacks as a sophomore.						
Brian Gaia	OL	6-5	285	★★★	Baltimore, MD	Gilman School
Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 23 offensive guard.						
Malik Golden	ATH	6-1	185	★★★	Cheshire, CT	Cheshire Academy
Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Connecticut by Rivals.com…Rushed for 745 yards and five touchdowns and caught 48 passes for 680 yards and five scores as a junior.						
Jesse James	TE	6-7	265	★★★	McKeesport, PA	South Allegheny
Rated as the No. 21 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com… Caught 34 passes for 463 yards as a junior.						
Austin Johnson	DT	6-4	276	★★★	Richland, NJ	St. Augustine
Rated as the No. 29 prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com…Also played basketball.						
Jake Kiley	ATH	6-2	173	★★	New Hampton, NH	New Hampton Prep
Had 30 tackles and three interceptions on defense and had eight rushing touchdowns, caught five touchdown passes and threw for two scores as a senior.						
Wendy Laurent	DT	6-4	285	★★	Princeton, NJ	Hun School
Chose Penn State over Bucknell, Buffalo, Connecticut, Delaware, Elon, Lehigh, Massachusetts, Navy, Northern Colorado, Richmond and Towson.						
Eugene Lewis	WR	6-2	181	★★★★	Plymouth, PA	Wyoming Valley
Rivals250 selection…Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Pennsylvania…Rated as the nation's No. 22 wide receiver…Rushed for 1,534 yards and 28 touchdowns and passed for 1,012 yards and 10 TDs as a senior.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jordan Lucas	DB	6-1	195	★★★	Worcester, MA	Worcester Academy
Played wide receiver and defensive back in high school…Chose Penn State over offers from Akron, Massachusetts, Old Dominion and Temple.						
Akeel Lynch	RB	6-0	205	★★★	Athol Springs, NY	St. Francis
Rated as the No. 3 prospect in New York by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 29 running back…Rushed for 2,131 yards and 25 touchdowns as a senior.						
Jamil Pollard	DT	6-5	280	★★★★	Westville, NJ	West Deptford
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 20 defensive tackle…Had 56 tackles and four sacks as a junior.						
Evan Schwan	DE	6-6	235	★★	Harrisburg, PA	Central Dauphin
Had 72 tackles and 16.5 sacks as a senior… Earned first-team all-state and all-conference honors in 2011…Selected to play in the 2012 Big 33 game.						
Anthony Stanko	OL	6-5	302	★★★	Warren, OH	Howland
Rated as the No. 37 prospect in Ohio by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 46 offensive tackle.						
Jonathan Warner	WR	6-2	200	★★	Camas, WA	Camas
Had 48 receptions for 775 yards and 11 touchdowns as a senior…Son of former Penn State All-American running back Curt Warner.						
Nyeem Wartman	LB	6-3	220	★★★	Archbald, PA	Valley View
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 35 outside linebacker…Had 115 tackles as a junior.						
Brent Wilkerson	TE	6-4	245	★★★	Hyattsville, MD	DeMatha
Rated as the No. 10 prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com…Rated as the nation's No. 17 tight end.						
Trevor Williams	WR	6-2	190	★★★	Towson, MD	Calvert Hall
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Maryland.						

PennState

NITTANY LIONS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
56	Anthony Alosi	OL	6-4	292	So.	Marlton, NJ
4	Adrian Amos	S	6-0	209	So.	Baltimore, MD
73	Mark Arcidiacono	G	6-4	283	Sr.	Holland
18	Deion Barnes	DE	6-4	248	So.	Philadelphia
31	Brad Bars	DE	6-3	237	Jr.	Nashville, TN
84	Kyle Baublitz	DE	6-5	270	Jr.	York
5	Bill Belton	TB	5-10	196	So.	Sicklerville, NJ
79	Kevin Blanchard	OL	6-7	276	So.	Katy, TX
1	Rob Bolden	QB	6-3	214	Jr.	Orchard Lake, MI
51	Drew Boyce	LB	6-1	224	So.	Olathe, KS
19	Justin Brown	WR	6-3	209	Sr.	Wilmington, DE
13	Tim Buckley	S	6-0	202	So.	Raleigh, NC
45	Alex Butterworth	P	5-10	198	Jr.	Indianapolis, IN
45	P.J. Byers	FB	6-0	254	Sr.	Harrison City
70	Nate Cadogan	T	6-5	283	Sr.	Portsmouth, OH
40	Glenn Carson	LB	6-3	238	Jr.	Manahawkin, NJ
87	Kyle Carter	TE	6-3	241	So.	Bear, DE
96	Cody Castor	DT	6-3	295	Sr.	Uniontown
77	Patrick Christie	T	6-5	296	Jr.	Carlisle
29	Jeff Cully	CB	5-11	199	Jr.	Allison Park
68	Bryan Davie	OL	6-2	347	Jr.	Greenbelt, MD
24	Derek Day	RB	5-9	195	Sr.	Bellefonte
39	Jesse Della Valle	CB	6-1	187	Jr.	Pittsburgh
65	Miles Dieffenbach	C	6-3	286	Jr.	Pittsburgh
2	Curtis Drake	CB	5-11	173	Sr.	Philadelphia
24	Jonathan Duckett	Saf	6-1	188	Jr.	Harrisburg
26	Curtis Dukes	TB	6-1	242	Sr.	Evans Mills, NY
33	Andre Dupree	FB	5-10	250	Sr.	Waldorf, MD
57	Emery Etter	KS	6-1	223	Sr.	Chambersburg
27	Jacob Fagnano	S	6-0	201	Sr.	Wiliamsport
78	Mike Farrell	T	6-6	276	Sr.	Pittsburgh
30	Anthony Fera	P/PK	6-2	220	Sr.	Cypress, TX
97	Sam Ficken	PK	6-3	180	So.	Valparaiso, IN
62	Frank Figueroa	G	6-3	303	Sr.	San Antonio, TX
15	Patrick Flanagan	DB	5-8	155	Jr.	State College
11	Khairi Fortt	LB	6-2	238	Jr.	Stamford, CT
21	Brian Friend	DB	6-1	195	Sr.	Pittsburgh
44	Michael Fuhrman	KS	5-10	214	Sr.	Pittsburgh
89	Garry Gilliam	TE	6-6	277	Sr.	Carlisle
52	Luke Graham	OL	6-4	273	Jr.	Harrison City
58	Adam Gress	T	6-6	306	Sr.	West Mifflin
75	Evan Hailes	DT	6-1	303	Jr.	Chesapeake, VA
10	Kevin Haplea	TE	6-4	248	Jr.	Annandale, NJ
47	Jordan Hill	DL	6-1	298	Sr.	Steelton
6	Gerald Hodges	LB	6-2	233	Sr.	Paulsboro, NJ
60	Ty Howle	C	6-0	298	Sr.	Wake Forest, NC
43	Mike Hull	LB	6-0	213	Jr.	Canonsburg
82	Brian Irvin	TE	6-3	241	Sr.	Orrtanna
18	Jesse James	TE	6-7	265	Fr.	Glassport
91	DaQuan Jones	DT	6-3	317	Jr.	Johnson City, NY
7	Paul Jones	QB	6-3	245	Jr.	McKees Rocks

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
23	Ryan Keiser	Saf	6-1	202	Jr.	Selinsgrove
15	Alex Kenney	WR	6-0	193	Jr.	State College
48	Jordan Kerner	DE	6-4	239	So.	Fairview
81	Shawney Kersey	WR	6-1	199	Sr.	Woodbury, NJ
38	Ben Kline	LB	6-2	224	So.	York
72	Khamrone Kolb	G	6-5	324	Jr.	Burke, VA
17	Christian Kuntz	WR	6-4	222	Sr.	Camp Hill
84	Matt Lehman	TE	6-7	247	Sr.	Newport
26	Kyle Lucas	LB	5-11	233	Sr.	Bellefonte
13	Tyler Lucas	QB	6-2	185	So.	Bellefonte
66	Angelo Mangiro	OL	6-3	287	So.	Succasunna, NJ
19	Matt Marcincin	PK	5-11	174	So.	Malvern
59	Pete Massaro	DE	6-4	263	Sr.	Newtown Square
42	Michael Mauti	LB	6-2	239	Sr.	Mandeville, LA
11	Matthew McGloin	QB	6-1	199	Sr.	Scranton
2	Shane McGregor	QB	6-1	200	Sr.	Ebensburg
12	Stephon Morris	CB	5-8	188	Sr.	Greenbelt, MD
85	Brandon Moseby-Felder	WR	6-2	188	Sr.	Fort Washington, MD
95	Carl Nassib	DE	6-6	230	So.	Malvern
71	Ryan Nowicki	OL	6-5	280	So.	Glendale, AZ
7	Stephen Obeng-Agyapong	S	5-10	201	Sr.	Bronx, NY
86	C.J. Olaniyan	DE	6-3	250	Jr.	Warren, MI
6	Shane Phillips	WR	6-5	192	So.	St. Albans, NY
16	Devin Pryor	DB	5-10	162	Jr.	San Bernardino, CA
25	Silas Redd	TB	5-10	200	Jr.	Norwalk, CT
41	J.R. Refice	FB	6-0	246	Sr.	Jessup
22	T.J. Rhattigan	LB	5-10	193	So.	Naperville, IL
8	Allen Robinson	WR	6-3	199	So.	Southfield, MI
32	Dakota Royer	TE	6-1	223	Jr.	Lancaster
75	Eric Shrive	G	6-6	312	Sr.	Scranton
3	Devon Smith	WR	5-7	147	Sr.	White Plains, MD
76	Donovan Smith	T	6-5	310	So.	Owings Mills, MD
88	Tyrone Smith	DT	6-4	247	Jr.	Pittsburgh
54	Matt Stankiewitch	C	6-3	295	Sr.	Orwigsburg
90	Sean Stanley	DE	6-1	247	Sr.	Rockville, MD
93	James Terry	DT	6-3	317	Sr.	New Castle, DE
1	Derrick Thomas	CB	6-0	181	Sr.	Greenbelt, MD
36	Deron Thompson	RB	5-10	190	So.	Lititz
64	John Urschel	G	6-3	287	Sr.	Williamsville, NY
54	James Van Fleet	LB	6-0	219	Sr.	Williamsport
14	Garrett Venuto	QB	6-0	219	Sr.	Ithaca, NY
14	Mike Wallace	CB	5-9	195	Sr.	Silver Springs, MD
10	Malcolm Willis	S	5-11	205	Sr.	Marbury, MD
86	Bryce Wilson	TE	6-3	248	So.	Camp Hill
33	Michael Yancich	LB	6-2	240	Sr.	Washington
80	Matt Zanellato	WR	6-3	195	So.	Burke, VA
35	Pat Zerbe	FB	6-1	233	Sr.	West Lawn
98	Anthony Zettel	DT	6-5	255	So.	West Branch, MI
9	Michael Zordich	RB	6-1	242	Sr.	Youngstown, OH
40	Zach Zwinak	RB	6-1	226	Jr.	Frederick, MD

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. McGloin	12	118.3	125	231	5	54.1	1571	8	74	130.9
R. Bolden	10	76.4	53	135	7	39.3	685	2	71	68.5

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
D. Moye	11	40	654	16.4	3	74	59.5
J. Brown	13	35	517	14.8	2	69	39.8
D. Smith	13	25	402	16.1	2	71	30.9

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
R. Redd	13	244	1262	21	1241	5.1	7	42	95.5
S. Green	8	61	275	9	266	4.4	6	39	33.2
C. Dukes	7	41	247	10	237	5.8	1	30	33.9

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: G. Hodges 106, D. Astorino 86, N. Stupar 80
Tackles for loss: D. Still 17, G. Hodges 10, J. Hill 8
Sacks: J. Crowford 6.5, G. Hodges 4.5, D. Still 4.5, S. Stanley 4.5
Interceptions: N. Sukay 3, N. Stupar 2, C. Powell 2

NOTEBOOK

Many Penn State football players raved about the new strength and conditioning program that **Craig Fitzgerald** implemented upon his arrival in January.

New Nittany Lions head coach **Bill O'Brien** called Fitzgerald the best strength and conditioning coach in the country and one of his most important hires.

Fitzgerald spent the last three seasons at South Carolina, helping the Gamecocks win a school-record 11 games last season. He teaches Olympic-style weight training, which is very different from the program that Penn State had the last two decades.

"It's kind of like night and day," center **Matt Stankiewitch** said. "We've really embraced the new program. We're all on the same page. We all have the same goals. What Coach Fitz and Coach O'Brien have brought here is fantastic."

• When Bill O'Brien decided to retain assistant coaches **Larry Johnson** and **Ron Vanderlinden**, the players at their positions were glad.

"I was ecstatic when Coach J called and let me know he was staying," defensive tackle **Jordan Hill** said. "That's such a big thing for Penn State football. He prepares his defensive linemen to be the best we could be."

Johnson has coached All-Americans **Jimmy Kennedy**, **Michael Haynes**, **Tamba Hali**, **Jared Odrick** and **Devon Still**. Vanderlinden, the linebackers coach, has guided such players as All-Americans **Paul Posluszny** and **Dan Connor**, and **NaVorro Bowman** and **Sean Lee**.

"I was happy to hear he was staying," linebacker **Michael Mauti** said. "The reason I went to Penn State was to work with Coach Vanderlinden. He's the best linebackers coach in the country and I wanted to be the best at my position."

• Penn State will play a night game at Beaver Stadium this fall for the seventh time in eight seasons.

The Nittany Lions will face Ohio State on Oct. 27 in a game that will be televised by ESPN or ESPN2. Last year was the first time since 2004 that Penn State didn't play a night game at home.

The Lions also will play a night game on the road, traveling to Iowa for an Oct. 20 game televised by the Big Ten Network.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"When you look at someone taking over for Joe Paterno, there's always the question of, 'Can I bring my own strength coach, can I bring my own trainer, can I bring my own support people?' David Joyner, the AD, has given Bill O'Brien free rein to build his own program in his own style with his own people. That has been very impressive. I didn't think that was automatic.

"They have a roster that needs to be built. I would not call them one of the most talented teams in the conference. ... It's just going to look like a different program, top to bottom. This is a drastic makeover in every sense of the word. It is going to take them some time, but Bill did a nice job finishing off recruiting last year and starting off recruiting this year."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Matt McGloin
Photo by Joe Robbins

Just a season earlier, though, Roof's defense ranked ninth in the nation against the run and held Oregon to 19 points in the BCS Championship Game.

"Coach Roof has a lot of different fronts and looks," defensive end Pete Massaro said. "It's not 180 degrees from what we've done before. It's not something that's revolutionary or is going to take a lot of time to learn."

Because Penn State has often ranked among the nation's top 15 defenses since 2004, it's no surprise that O'Brien retained defensive line coach Larry Johnson and linebackers coach Ron Vanderlinden from Joe Paterno's staff.

Johnson, who has produced four first- or second-round draft picks since 2005, will have tackle Jordan Hill and end Sean Stanley as returning starters. Pete Massaro, who started at end in 2010 before missing last season with a knee injury, also is back.

Vanderlinden, who has guided four linebackers into the NFL since 2005, has another talented group, but one with medical issues. Carson and All-Big Ten pick Gerald Hodges are back and will play alongside Michael Mauti or Khairi Fortt, who each missed all or most of spring practice with knee injuries.

"Guys are getting used to the terminology," Mauti said. "It's all different. At the end of the day, you have to read keys and make tackles. The sky's the limit for the linebackers."

Penn State has depth there, but not in the secondary. Wide receiver Curtis Drake was converted to cornerback, where he could play alongside Stephon Morris. Malcolm Willis and Adrian Amos appear to be the leaders at safety.

"Every time we learn something new we're more excited to play," safety Stephen Obeng-Agyapong said. "One of our goals is to become one of the most aggressive defenses in the nation."

If style is worth anything, Roof has won over the players.

"Coach Roof is great," Massaro said. "He does a lot of great things. He's a really smart guy. He's a motivator. He's really good at pushing people and getting the most out of them. He seems like an awesome coach so far."

SPECIAL TEAMS

Anthony Fera returns as Penn State's kicker and punter after a successful 2011 season.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

LB Gerald Hodges

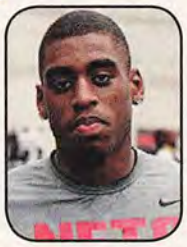
The senior was selected to the All-Big Ten first team by coaches and second team by media in 2011. ... Led Penn State and ranked eighth in Big Ten with 106 tackles. ... Had 10 tackles for loss, 4.5 sacks, four pass break-ups, two forced fumbles and one interception. ... Made a career-high 19 tackles against Illinois. ... Missed nearly half of 2010 with hairline leg fracture.

EMERGING STAR

DB Adrian Amos

Sophomore played in 12 games at cornerback last season and started once. ... Might move to safety this season, where he seems more like a natural. ... Made an interception in his first game at Penn State. ... Has strong cover skills with four pass break-ups. ... Was named Baltimore City Defensive Player of the Year as high school senior. ... Chose Penn State over Connecticut, Vanderbilt, West Virginia and Temple.

TOP NEWCOMER



WR Eugene Lewis

Four-star recruit who played quarterback in high school. ... Rated the No. 22 wide receiver prospect in the nation and No. 4 overall prospect in Pennsylvania by Rivals. ... Ran and passed for more than 1,000 yards in each of the last two seasons. ... Also an outstanding basketball player. ... Chose Penn State over Maryland, Oregon, Pittsburgh and Virginia Tech.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	28.9	52
Rushing	169.8	41
Passing	237.2	39
Total	406.9	37
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	12.2	3
Rushing	89.9	6
Passing	184.6	24
Total	274.5	9
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 6	+ 0.46	26

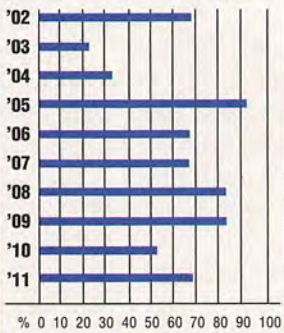
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	24.5	81
Rushing	142.5	74
Passing	229.7	52
Total	372.2	68
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	23.7	50
Rushing	165.6	74
Passing	181.2	16
Total	346.9	35
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.31	75

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	19.3	110
Rushing	165.4	46
Passing	177.0	96
Total	342.4	95
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	16.8	5
Rushing	133.3	42
Pass	190.6	17
Total	323.9	20
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

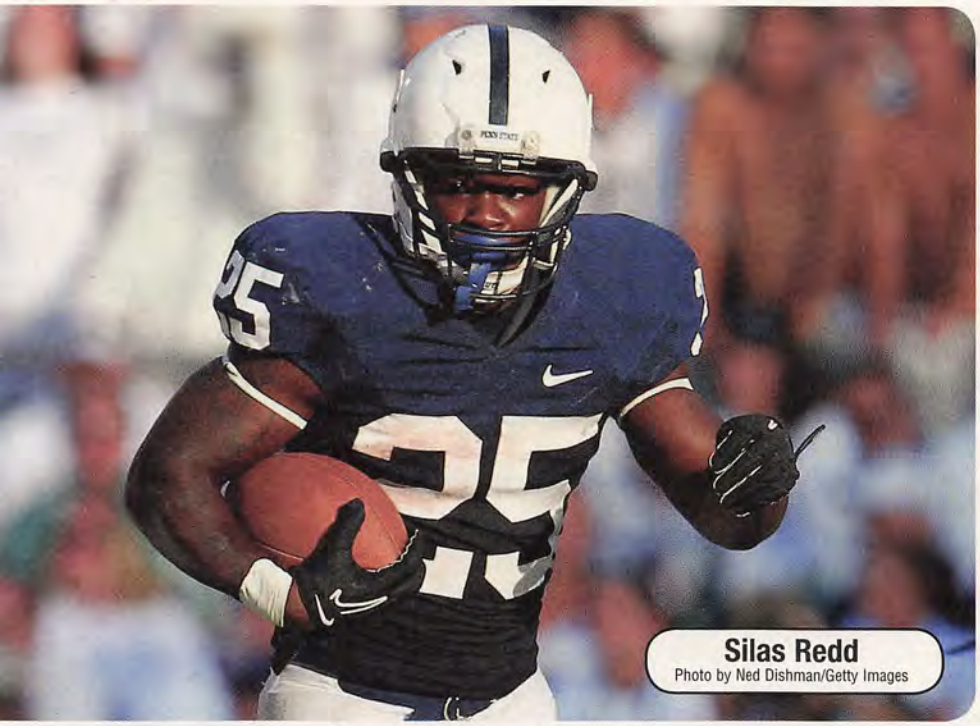


RESULTS

9-4, 6-2

W	INDIANA STATE	41-7
L	ALABAMA	11-27
W	at Temple	14-10
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	34-6
W	at Indiana	16-10
W	IOWA	13-3
W	PURDUE	23-18
W	at Northwestern	34-24
W	ILLINOIS	10-7
L	NEBRASKA	14-17
W	at Ohio State	20-14
L	at Wisconsin	7-45
	Ticket City Bowl	
L	vs. Houston	14-30

PLAYER PROFILE



Silas Redd
Photo by Ned Dishman/Getty Images

Code Redd: Hard Work Will Pay Off

Shortly after Craig Fitzgerald arrived at Penn State in January as the new strength and conditioning coach, Silas Redd sat down with him.

Redd told Fitzgerald that he wanted to lift like the linemen and run like the wide receivers.

"I'm getting pretty close," Redd said during spring practice. "After the winter tests, I was the third-strongest on the team, pound for pound. I'm trying to be No. 1 when we do our next testing.

"That's because I'm buying into what they're doing in there. I really believe in it. I'm not a slacker. When I go in there, I'm not playing around."

Redd didn't fool around in his first two seasons at Penn State. He averaged 5.7 yards per carry as a freshman while playing behind Evan Royster, the school's all-time leading rusher. He enjoyed a breakout year in 2011, rushing for 1,241 yards and being named to the All-Big Ten second team.

And he's serious about becoming a complete running back. He's working to become stronger and faster and trying to improve his pass-catching and blocking.

"I'm trying to become a great overall back," Redd said. "I've been working on my hands a lot. I dropped a couple balls last year.

"The main thing I'm working on is blocking. Coach (Bill O'Brien) said most rookie running backs (in the NFL) don't know how to block. God willing, if I get a chance to go to the next level, that's something I want to be pretty good at."

Redd was pretty good running the ball last year, especially when he posted five consecutive 100-yard games in midseason and led the nation in rushing in October with 703 yards.

But he suffered a collarbone injury against Nebraska, which limited his effectiveness the rest of the season. He still managed to finish with the 10th-highest rushing total in Penn State history.

"I'm pretty pleased with where the running game is," O'Brien said.

Redd suffered from mild tendinitis in his right knee and saw fewer repetitions during spring practice, but he expects to be fine in the fall. So do his teammates.

"Silas is doing what he always does," center Matt Stankiewitch said. "He's relentless. He runs the ball hard. He's always trying to get those extra yards. It doesn't matter if it's a practice or a game. He's one of the hardest workers on the team. He prides himself on that."

Fera, the regular punter since 2010, became the first Nittany Lion since 1975 to handle placekicking, punting and kickoff duties in the same game last year.

He made 14 of 17 field-goal attempts, including a career-long 46-yarder. He averaged 42.0 yards on 64 punts and had 18 land inside the 20. He was named the second-team All-Big Ten punter.

The rest of Penn State's special teams were mediocre. Justin Brown returns as the punt returner after he averaged 8.1 yards. Adrian Amos, Devon Smith and Bill Belton are among the candidates to return kickoffs.

The Lions ranked sixth in the Big Ten in kickoff coverage and net punting.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Penn State will face 10 bowl teams, starting with the season opener against Ohio at Beaver Stadium.

The Nittany Lions travel to Virginia the following week before finishing the non-conference schedule with home games against Navy and Temple.

Penn State opens Big Ten play on the road for the third straight season, but the Nittany Lions play Leaders Division rivals Ohio State and Wisconsin at home.

Penn State will make its first trip to Nebraska since 2003 before finishing with back-to-back home games against Indiana and Wisconsin.

— Rich Scarcella

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	OHIO	10-4
Sept. 8	at Virginia	8-5
Sept. 15	NAVY	5-7
Sept. 22	TEMPLE	9-4
Sept. 29	at Illinois	7-6
Oct. 6	NORTHWESTERN	6-7
Oct. 20	at Iowa	7-6
Oct. 27	OHIO STATE	6-7
Nov. 3	at Purdue	7-6
Nov. 10	at Nebraska	9-4
Nov. 17	INDIANA	1-11
Nov. 24	WISCONSIN	11-3

MIAMI (OHIO) | REDHAWKS

MAC rank: 7 **Record: 4-8** **MAC record: 3-5 (T-4th, East)** **Stadium: Yager Stadium (24,286)**

By Bob Narang

Photo by John Williamson

"Zac does a great job of keeping his composure to find his receivers when there's pressure."
— Coach Don Treadwell

REDHAWKS at a GLANCE

COACH: Don Treadwell — At Miami and overall: 4-8, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Klacik
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Peterson

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2010
LAST BOWL: 2010, GoDaddy.com
RETURNING STARTERS: 17; 8 offense, 7 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Zac Dysert, WR Nick Harwell, WR Andy Cruse, DE Jason Semmes, DT Austin Brown, CB Dayonne Nunley, S Pat Hinkel

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Dysert and Harwell have great chemistry and form a lethal duo in Miami's spread offense. Dysert is one of the nation's most unheralded quarterbacks, while Harwell is a dynamic player capable of taking over a game. A revamped defensive coaching staff brought energy and enthusiasm that might help a group with seven returning starters.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The offensive line gave up 47 sacks in 2011. There's been some movement along the line during the spring; whether that translates into a more cohesive unit could determine the success of Miami's season. The schedule is brutal, with five of the first seven games on the road.

OFFENSE

Senior quarterback Zac Dysert, a three-year starter, is billed by Miami as "college football's best-kept secret" heading into the 2012 season.

His national name recognition is several rungs below that of Matt Barkley or Landry Jones, but Dysert deserves the "best-kept secret" title based on his gaudy career statistics of 8,530 passing yards, 48 touchdown passes, and a 64-percent completion rate.

Dysert is a gunslinger in Miami's spread offense, but the RedHawks' offensive line had trouble creating holes to develop a consistent running game, surrendering a whopping 47 sacks in 2011.

Coach Don Treadwell emphasized improving the running game to make the offense a two-dimensional threat after the RedHawks averaged 2.4 yards per carry last season. Another area that the RedHawks worked on was finding a consistent tight end threat, as Matt Kennedy was moved from right tackle to tight end.

Junior wide receiver Nick Harwell, who caught 97 passes for 1,425 yards and nine touchdowns in 2011, is a big-time threat capable of making post-season award lists. Not only do Dysert and Harwell form a lethal combination, but the RedHawks possess a deep reservoir of returning talent at wide receiver to rack up yardage.

DEFENSE

The RedHawks brought in three new defensive coaches, including coordinator Jay Peterson, to help foster a tougher attitude. The defense posted solid numbers in 2011, ranking 24th in the country in pass defense, 39th in scoring defense and 48th in total defense.

But the RedHawks intercepted just 10 passes after recording 21 picks in 2010. They also allowed a whopping 55 percent fourth-down conversion rate.

The 4-3 defense is strong at defensive line because of tackles Austin Brown and Mike Johns. The RedHawks are sketchy at linebacker with strong safety Pat Hinkle trying his hand at weakside linebacker late in the spring.

In the secondary, cornerback Dayonne Nunley is an all-conference performer.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The RedHawks have to improve in all facets on special teams. Harwell failed to have a punt return longer than 14 yards. Nunley is an explosive kick returner after averaging 23 yards per return last season.

Kicker Mason Krysinski attempted all six of Miami's field-goal attempts in 2011, making two, and must battle for his position. Punter Zac Murphy boomed seven punts 50 yards or longer last year.

OVERVIEW

Treadwell overhauled the defensive staff despite a productive showing last year. The RedHawks plan on showing more aggression and forcing more turnovers. The combination of Dysert and Harwell is electric, but the offense lacks a proven tailback and tight end.

The RedHawks didn't beat a winning team last year, lost their first four games, finished the season with three straight defeats and had trouble winning close games. Sure, things could change with better health and chemistry along the offensive line, but the schedule is difficult and making progress won't be easy.

TOP NEWCOMER

RB Jack Snowball: Might get a chance to get quality carries with a good showing in fall camp because of Miami's issues with health and depth at the position. Snowball rushed for 2,594 yards and 31 touchdowns at Wadsworth High School in Ohio last year. He never fumbled in his prep career.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**4**	**Zac Dysert***	**6-4**	**219**	**Sr.**
RB	46	Justin Semmes	6-2	226	Jr.
WR	**8**	**Nick Harwell***	**6-1**	**190**	**Jr.**
WR	**15**	**Andy Cruse***	**6-4**	**215**	**Sr.**
WR	**12**	**Willie Culpepper***	**5-9**	**155**	**So.**
TE	82	Matt Kennedy	6-5	248	Sr.
LT	71	Zach Lewis	6-6	275	So.
LG	**75**	**Marcus Matthews***	**6-3**	**310**	**So.**
C	**52**	**Joseph Williams***	**6-2**	**285**	**Sr.**
RG	**67**	**John Anevski***	**6-3**	**285**	**Jr.**
RT	**72**	**Brad Bednar***	**6-4**	**292**	**Sr.**
DEFENSE					
DE	57	Wes Williams	6-3	244	Jr.
DT	**90**	**Austin Brown***	**6-2**	**270**	**Sr.**
NT	**94**	**Mike Johns***	**6-4**	**271**	**Sr.**
DE	**93**	**Jason Semmes***	**6-3**	**233**	**Sr.**
LB	**30**	**Evan Harris***	**6-0**	**223**	**Sr.**
LB	38	Tyler Tucker	6-2	217	So.
LB	32	Jaytee Swanson	6-2	218	Sr.
CB	**3**	**Dayonne Nunley***	**5-8**	**180**	**Jr.**
CB	**6**	**D.J. Brown***	**6-1**	**180**	**Sr.**
SS	**37**	**Pat Hinkel***	**6-1**	**199**	**Sr.**
FS	35	Brison Burris	5-10	179	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**39**	**Mason Krysinski***	**6-3**	**203**	**Jr.**
P	**45**	**Zac Murphy***	**6-0**	**199**	**Jr.**

* Returning Starters in Bold

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Ohio State
Sept. 8	SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 15	at Boise State
Sept. 22	MASSACHUSETTS
Sept. 29	at Akron
Oct. 6	at Cincinnati
Oct. 13	at Bowling Green
Oct. 27	OHIO
Nov. 3	at Buffalo
Nov. 10	KENT STATE
Nov. 17	at Central Michigan
Nov. 23	BALL STATE

2011 RESULTS

L	at Missouri	6-17
L	at Minnesota	23-29
L	BOWLING GREEN	23-37
L	CINCINNATI	0-27
W	ARMY	35-28
W	at Kent State	9-3
L	at Toledo	28-49
W	BUFFALO	41-13
W	AKRON	35-3
L	at Temple	21-24
L	WESTERN MICHIGAN	21-24
L	at Ohio	14-21

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	21.3	103
Rushing	73.8	120
Passing	299.1	14
Total	372.9	75
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	22.9	39
Rushing	168.5	75
Passing	195.2	24
Total	363.7	48
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 4	- 0.33	85

PURDUE BOILERMAKERS

For more coverage of the Boilermakers, visit purdue.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Gary Nord | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tim Tibesar** | **STADIUM: Rose-Ade: 62,500**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
7-6, 4-4 Big Ten (3rd, Leaders)

COACH:
Danny Hope — At Purdue: 16-21, 3 years; overall: 51-43, 8 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
15; 7 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Caleb TerBush, QB Robert Marve, RB Akeem Shavers, WR/KR Raheem Mostert, DT Kawann Short, DE Ryan Russell, CB Ricardo Allen, CB Josh Johnson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The defensive front and secondary have enough talent and experience to carry the Boilermakers, who will probably mix up their schemes throughout the season. Led by Shavers, the running game should guide the offense. The return game is expected to produce more big plays.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Lack of depth on the offensive line and linebacker might hold back the Boilermakers. Hope also insists on playing multiple quarterbacks, and he has three with experience to choose from. Can Purdue establish continuity while playing more than one quarterback?

KEY LOSSES:
WR Justin Siller, LT Dennis Kelly, RG Nick Mondek, LB Joe Holland, S Albert Evans, K Carson Wiggs

OVERVIEW:
Coming off a strong finish to the 2011 season, the seasoned Boilermakers look to ride the momentum into Hope's fourth season. The schedule is favorable, with Leaders Division opponents Wisconsin, Penn State and Indiana at home. With Ohio State ineligible for the conference title game, Purdue looks like a reasonable darkhorse in the league.

Optimistic Boilermakers Take Aim at Leaders Title

Purdue's 2012 season is about opportunity.

For the first time in coach Danny Hope's tenure, there's genuine optimism about an upcoming season.

Is it because the Boilermakers feature more than one healthy quarterback? Or is it the veteran cast on offense and defense?

Maybe it's the new energy and enthusiasm injected by three new coaches on the defensive side. Or, the momentum from last season when Purdue won a bowl game for the first time since 2007.

Regardless, this is a chance for Hope and his program to show significant progress in establishing its own identity.

There's new blood among the defensive coaches and a prevailing attitude that the Boilermakers can become major players in the chase for a Big Ten championship.

With Ohio State ineligible to play in the league title game because of NCAA sanctions, the Leaders Division is up for grabs.

While Wisconsin remains the favorite, new coaches at Illinois and Penn State give Purdue a window to move up in the standings. But do the Boilermakers have enough to accomplish their goals?

In order to reach those goals, the offensive production needs to improve, but there's plenty of experience at quarterback. Caleb TerBush, Robert Marve and Rob Henry have all made starts, giving Hope the luxury of a reliable player under center.

TerBush started all 13 games last season, and all signs point to Marve being healthy after struggling last season. Meanwhile, Henry is coming back after missing last year with a knee injury, but he is expected to be in the mix.

How offensive coordinator Gary Nord uses the three quarterbacks will likely dictate how much success the Boilermakers have on offense.

It's on defense where Purdue has the most experience and talent.

Wholesale changes were made on the defensive coaching staff, and Hope is banking on defensive coordinator Tim Tibesar using some 3-4 alignments to spark improved play. Purdue isn't abandoning its traditional 4-3 look but is looking to add wrinkles to a unit that should be a strength.

Tibesar has plenty to work with up front and in the secondary.

Defensive tackle Kawann Short bypassed the NFL Draft and has a chance to move into the first round with a solid season. Led by cornerbacks Josh Johnson and Ricardo Allen, the secondary is in position to shine.

Special teams have become a strength, especially kickoff returns. Raheem Mostert, who will see playing time at receiver, led the nation in kickoff returns and can change momentum in a matter of seconds.

Purdue has questions going into the 2012 season, but there's more than enough to make a run. It's just a matter if the Boilermakers can take full advantage of the opportunity.

OFFENSE

Going into 2011, Hope's goal for a two-quarterback system was put on hold when Rob Henry suffered a season-ending knee injury two weeks before the first game.

With three experienced quarterbacks returning, Hope again plans to use multiple quarterbacks in 2012.

Caleb TerBush started all 13 games last year, and Robert Marve returns for a sixth year of eligibility apparently healthy after a knee injury two years ago lingered into last season. Henry was on pace to become the No. 1 quarter-

Akeem Shavers
Photo by Joe Robbins

back last season before his injury.

"I want to get back to where I was and beyond," Henry said.

"I want to become the best player I can possibly be for our team and the best player my God-given talent will allow me to be. If I can get ... my strength back, my speed back, quickness and everything, I feel like I'll be in a pretty good spot."

How Hope utilizes all three quarterbacks is something to watch throughout the season.

The line has experience, led by guard Peters Drey and center Rick Schmeig, but Kevin Pamphile has proven he can play multiple spots. Pamphile was moved from the defensive line to guard midway through last season, but has worked out at tackle.

"He can be an exceptional tackle," Hope said. "Sometimes, he plays better in a two-point stance rather than a three-point stance. He's bigger and stronger than most of the ends he's going to play against."

In the backfield, Akeem Shavers proved he could handle the No. 1 spot following his MVP performance in the bowl victory against Western Michigan. Shavers may have to become the top ball carrier if Ralph Bolden, the team's top rusher last year, doesn't return. Bolden suffered a knee injury in the regular-season finale and may not be healthy enough at the start.

Questions remain at receiver, but Antavian Edison is back for a fourth season and remains a top target. Depth is a concern with this group and finding another go-to receiver is a priority going into training camp. But the tight end spot features plenty of depth.

When healthy, Gabe Holmes is a threat, but other options have emerged. Crosby Wright, voted a captain in the spring, gives the Boilermakers a solid blocker and reliable pass catcher. One player to watch is Carlos Carvajal, a 6-7 freshman who stood out during spring practice.

"When I first started, I didn't know any of the plays and I was blocking the wrong guy and running the wrong route," Carvajal said. "I showed the coaches I can be a threat down-the-field or anytime they need me."

DEFENSE

Hope didn't like his team's defensive performance last season. A slow start and too many missed assignments worked against the Boilermakers.

So he made changes.

The top change came at the coordinator spot; Hope fired Gary Emanuel and replaced him with Tim Tibesar.

"We have to execute our base defense a lot better," Hope said. "We gave up some big plays and there were times we didn't give ourselves a chance to compete because we didn't execute the details of our alignments and our assignments.

Ricardo Allen
Photo by Joe Robbins

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Caleb TerBush*	Sr.	A crowded position should be good for Boilers.	Robert Marve, Sr.
RB	Akeem Shavers	Sr.	Had 22 carries for 149 yards in bowl victory.	A. Hunt, So.; R. Bolden, Sr.*
WR	Gary Bush	Jr.	Caught 33-yard touchdown pass in bowl win.	Shane Mikesky, Fr.
WR	Raheem Mostert	So.	Led nation in kickoff returns (33.5-yard average).	Tommie Thomas, Sr.
WR	Antavian Edison*	Sr.	Team-best 584 receiving yards in 2011.	O.J. Ross, Jr.
TE	Gabe Holmes	Jr.	Knee injury limited playing time last year.	Crosby Wright, Sr.*
LT	Trevor Foy*	Jr.	Made nine starts at right tackle in 2011.	Jack De Boef, So.
LG	Peters Drey*	Sr.	Missed last five games with back injury.	Eric McDaniel, Jr.
C	Rick Schmeig*	Sr.	One of the top performers in the spring.	Robert Kugler, Fr.
RG	Kevin Pamphile	Jr.	Moved from defensive line last year.	Cody Davis, Jr.
RT	Justin Kitchens	Jr.	Started the first four games in 2011.	Josh Davis, So.
K	Sam McCartney	Fr.	Walk-on to be challenged by two freshmen.	Paul Griggs, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Ryan Russell*	So.	High-motor player who is disruptive.	Jalani Phillips, So.
DT	Kawann Short*	Sr.	Poised for a big season and to be a high draft pick.	Ryan Isaac, Jr.
DT	Bruce Gaston*	Jr.	Along with Short, two of the better linemen in Big Ten.	Brandon Taylor, Jr.
DE	Robert Maci	Sr.	Could see action at linebacker in 3-4 scheme.	Greg Latta, Jr.
LB	Will Lucas*	Jr.	Third-leading tackler in 2011; recovered two fumbles.	Joe Gilliam, So.
LB	Dwayne Beckford*	Sr.	Three sacks last year; was suspended for bowl game.	Antwon Higgs, Sr.
LB	Mike Lee	So.	Sat out most of spring practice with concussion.	Armstead Williams, Fr.
CB	Ricardo Allen*	Jr.	Team-high three INTs; started 25 straight games.	Normondo Harris, Jr.
CB	Josh Johnson*	Sr.	Physical player that has improved each season.	Frankie Williams, Fr.
SS	Max Charlot	Sr.	Steady player gained valuable experience last season.	E.J. Johnson, So.
FS	Taylor Richards	So.	Delivered first interception in bowl win.	Chris Quinn, Sr.
P	Cody Webster*	Jr.	Averaged 42.9 yards to rank second in the Big Ten.	Thomas Meadows, Fr.

*Returning Starter

BOILERMAKERS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Ryan Watson
Purdue has been known as the Cradle of Quarterbacks, but in recent years their defensive end production has been most noteworthy. From Cliff Avril to Ray Edwards to Ryan Kerrigan, the Boilermakers have been pumping out NFL caliber defensive ends, and the 6-3, 270-pound Watson could be next in that line.

Carlos Carvajal
Carvajal was a hold-over from the 2011 class who needed a year of prep school to qualify academically. He emerged from Milford Academy in New York as a 6-7, 215-pound tight end and ranked as the No. 6 prep school prospect in the country. Expect him to contribute early in his Boilermaker's career.

Devin Smith
The 6-7, 315-pound Smith returns to the Midwest after two years at Arizona Western Community College where he developed into one of the top JUCO offensive tackles in the country. A Michigan native, Smith will be counted on to come in and lend immediate depth to the left tackle position in West Lafayette.

THE SLEEPER

Jordan Woods
Woods was part of the first class to play four years at the new Skyline High School in Ann Arbor, Mich. As such, the program had no football tradition to speak of and Woods flew under most college programs' radars, but the 6-3, 175-pound receiver's highly productive career caught the attention of Purdue coaches.

Committments	26
Average Stars	3.00
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	2
★★★☆☆	22
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	78
National Rank: 33	Big Ten: 4

2013 NEEDS: Three of the Boilermaker's top five receivers from the 2011 season are gone, and another will enter his final season at Purdue this fall. Danny Hope and his staff targeted the wide receiver position heavily in the 2012 class, but expect them to load up on pass-catchers again in 2013. On the defensive side of the football, Purdue will look to add linebackers, and also needs to add depth at the safety position.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Danny Anthrop	WR	6-0	175	★★★	Lafayette, IN	Central Catholic
Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Chose Purdue over offers from Akron and Buffalo.						
Austin Appleby	QB	6-5	228	★★★	North Canton, OH	Hoover
Passed for 1,417 yards and eight touchdowns as a senior...Threw for 1,427 yards and 14 touchdowns in seven games as a junior.						
Anthony Brown	DB	5-11	175	★★★	Tampa, FL	Hillsborough
Rated as the No. 100 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 51 cornerback.						
Carlos Carvajal	ATH	6-7	215	★★★★	New Berlin, NY	Milford Academy
Rated as the nation's No. 6 prep school prospect by Rivals.com...Chose Purdue over FIU, Louisville, Marshall, Memphis, Minnesota, USF and Tennessee.						
Cameron Cermin	OL	6-5	291	★★★	College Station, TX	A&M Consolidated
Helped lead an offense that averaged 354.2 yards per game...Chose Purdue over Rice, SMU, Tulsa and others.						
Jonathan Curry	TE	6-2	224	★★★	Phenix City, AL	Central
Rated as the No. 24 prospect in Alabama by Rivals.com...Had 14 receptions for 200 yards and a touchdown as a junior.						
Andy Garcia	LB	5-11	210	★★★	Hialeah, FL	Hialeah
Earned First-team All-Dade County honors as a senior...Had 111 tackles, 12 sacks and 20 tackles for loss in 2011.						
Aloyis Gray	QB	6-3	165	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Pike
Rated as the No. 12 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 24 dual-threat quarterback.						
Robert Gregory	QB	6-3	181	★★★	Chicago, IL	Simeon
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Illinois by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 14 dual-threat quarterback.						
Paul Griggs	K	6-0	195	★★★	Charlotte, NC	Latin
Rated as the nation's No. 5 kicker...Selected to the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.						
Jimmy Herman	LB	6-3	195	★★★	Carmel, IN	Carmel
Rated as the No. 18 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Chose Purdue over Northwestern and Western Michigan.						
Kingsley Ike	DE	6-4	230	★★★	Pflugerville, TX	Hendrickson
Second-team all-district selection in 2011...Had 61 tackles and six sacks in 2010.						
Jason King	OL	6-4	295	★★	Little Rock, AR	Pulaski Academy
Helped lead team to a state title as a senior...Chose Purdue over Colorado, Kansas and others.						

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Benjamin (BJ) Knauf	WR	5-10	173	★★★	Lakeland, FL	Santa Fe Catholic
Rushed for 1,769 yards, threw for 861 yards and scored 33 total touchdowns as a senior...Recorded 90 tackles on defense.						
Greg Latta	DE	6-6	265	★★★	Palm Desert, CA	College of the Desert
Didn't start playing football until junior college...Had nine tackles and 1.5 tackles for loss in his only season on defense.						
Bilal Marshall	QB	6-3	170	★★★	Hialeah, FL	Dade Christian
Rated as the No. 99 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 18 dual-threat quarterback.						
Thomas Meadows	K	6-0	170	★★	Goochland, VA	Goochland
Averaged 41.2 yards per punt in 2011... First-team all-district, first team all-region and All-Metro as a senior ... Participated in the Chesapeake Bowl.						
Ryan Morris	TE	6-6	241	★★★	Barnegat, NJ	Barnegat
Rated as the No. 25 prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com... Caught 21 passes for 358 yards and two touchdowns as a senior.						
Cameron Posey	WR	6-2	175	★★★	Delray Beach, FL	American Heritage School
Helped lead team to a state title as a senior...Caught 16 passes for 266 yards and six touchdowns as a junior.						
James Prince	OL	6-6	268	★★★	Southlake, TX	Carroll
Chose Purdue over SMU, Houston, Louisiana Tech, Memphis, New Mexico and Oregon State.						
Jordan Roos	OL	6-6	300	★★★	Celina, TX	Celina
Rated as the No. 97 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 63 offensive tackle.						
Jordan Shine	DB	6-0	185	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Warren Central
Had 87 tackles, five interceptions and five pass breakups as a senior... Had 35 tackles, an interception and six pass breakups as a junior.						
Devin Smith	OL	6-7	315	★★★	Yuma, AZ	Arizona Western C.C.
Helped lead team to an 11-1 record in 2011...Chose Purdue over East Carolina, Eastern Michigan, Kansas, Memphis, MTSU, SMU and Toledo.						
Joey Warburg	OL	6-5	255	★★★	Louisville, KY	Trinity
Team won back-to-back state titles his junior and senior seasons...Chose Purdue over Louisville.						
Ryan Watson	DE	6-3	270	★★★★	Olney, MD	Our Lady Of Good Counsel
Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Maryland by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 16 strongside defensive end...Participated in the Chesapeake Bowl.						
Jordan Woods	WR	6-3	175	★★★	Ann Arbor, MI	Skyline
Had 45 receptions for 1,163 yards and 16 touchdowns as a senior... Caught 65 passes for 1,103 yards and 11 touchdowns as a junior.						

BOILERMAKERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
21	Ricardo Allen	CB	5-9	176	Jr.	Daytona Beach, FL
22	Ishmael Aristide	WR	5-11	199	Jr.	Orlando, FL
60	Chuck Ayres	OT	6-4	225	Fr.	Eau Claire, WI
63	Patrick Bade	OT	6-6	227	Jr.	Indianapolis
14	Erich Berzinskas	QB	6-5	205	Fr.	Clinton, CT
23	Ralph Bolden	RB	5-9	190	Sr.	Folkston, GA
6	Gary Bush	WR	6-0	175	Jr.	Miami, FL
30	Charles Carter	RB	5-10	208	Fr.	Gary
81	Sterling Carter	TE	6-5	233	Jr.	Torrance, CA
92	Carlos Carvajal	TE	6-7	215	Fr.	Hileah, FL
34	Max Charlot	S	6-0	190	Sr.	Corona, CA
41	Sean Collins	CB	5-7	172	Jr.	Indianapolis
70	LaSalle Cooks	DT	6-3	271	Sr.	Orlando, FL
25	Brandon Cottom	RB	6-4	255	So.	Newtown, PA
59	Cody Davis	C	6-5	286	Jr.	Spring, TX
75	Josh Davis	OT	6-5	294	So.	Plain City, OH
54	Jack De Boef	OT	6-7	284	So.	Penn Furnace, PA
67	Peters Drey	C	6-6	310	Sr.	Mobile, AL
13	Antavian Edison	WR	5-11	175	Sr.	Fort Meyers, FL
18	Nnamdi Ezenwa	LB	6-2	225	Sr.	Acworth, GA
44	Landon Feichter	S	6-0	178	So.	Fort Wayne
78	Trevor Foy	OT	6-7	287	Jr.	Louisville, KY
46	Kurt Freytag	FB	6-2	225	Sr.	Carmel
90	Bruce Gaston	DT	6-2	303	Jr.	Chicago, IL
35	Doug Gentry	RB	6-0	190	Fr.	Mexia, TX
39	Joe Gilliam	LB	6-1	211	So.	Indianapolis
65	Kyle Harris	OG	6-3	280	Fr.	Lafayette
1	Normondo Harris	CB	6-0	180	Jr.	Miami, FL
36	Robert Harris	K	6-0	205	Jr.	Columbia, TN
36	Zack Heiniger	LB	5-11	207	Sr.	Fishers
15	Rob Henry	QB	6-2	200	Jr.	Ocala, FL
5	Antwon Higgs	LB	6-3	252	Sr.	Pompano Beach, FL
39	Devin Hill	RB	5-10	228	Fr.	Columbus, OH
86	Gabe Holmes	TE	6-5	247	Jr.	Miramar, FL
77	Matt Huene	OT	6-5	258	Fr.	Mount Prospect, IL
11	Akeem Hunt	RB	5-9	175	So.	Covington, GA
61	Ryan Isaac	DT	6-5	266	Jr.	Michigan City
40	Derek Jackson	FB	6-1	227	Sr.	Glen Allen, VA
7	E.J. Johnson	S	6-1	178	So.	Cocoa, FL
28	Josh Johnson	CB	5-11	195	Sr.	Dade City, FL
51	Justin Kitchens	OT	6-4	275	Jr.	Warner Robins, GA
57	Robert Kugler	C	6-3	244	Fr.	Pittsburgh, PA
91	Greg Latta	DE	6-6	265	Jr.	La Quinta, CA
38	Mike Lee	LB	6-2	220	So.	North Braddock, PA
26	Antoine Lewis	CB	5-10	182	So.	Broadview, IL
40	Collin Link	LB	6-1	200	So.	West Liberty, OH
52	Henry Lorenzen	C	6-2	298	Jr.	Wilsonville, Ontario
45	Will Lucas	LB	5-11	226	Jr.	Lakeland, FL
16	Dolapo Macarthy	WR	6-5	220	Fr.	Merrillville
58	Robert Maci	DE	6-4	241	Sr.	Fishers
9	Robert Marve	QB	6-1	212	Sr.	Tampa, FL
43	Sam McCartney	K	6-4	183	Fr.	West Lafayette
56	Eric McDaniel	OG	6-2	285	Jr.	Calhoun, GA
84	Eric Mebane	DE	6-3	211	Sr.	Grand Prairie, TX
87	Shane Mikesky	WR	6-4	197	Fr.	Zionsville
8	Raheem Mostert	WR	5-11	180	So.	New Smyrna Beach, FL
64	Kevin Pamphile	OL	6-5	241	Jr.	Miami, FL
17	Austin Parker	QB	5-11	194	Fr.	Fort Wayne
89	Jalani Phillips	LB	6-4	255	So.	Warner Robbins, GA
29	Chris Quinn	S	5-11	191	Sr.	Miami, FL
4	Taylor Richards	DB	5-10	180	So.	Lake Mary, FL
20	Gavin Roberts	RB	6-0	210	Sr.	Somerset, NJ
10	Sean Robinson	LB	6-3	210	Jr.	Springfield, IL
97	Michael Rouse, III	DT	6-4	305	Fr.	Flossmoor, IL
99	Ryan Russell	DE	6-5	264	So.	Carrollton, TX
76	Rick Schmeig	OG	6-3	320	Sr.	Cincinnati, OH
50	Jesse Schmitt	LS	6-2	236	So.	Louisville, KY
24	Akeem Shavers	RB	5-11	203	Sr.	Texarkana, TX
93	Kawann Short	DT	6-3	310	Sr.	East Chicago
80	Zack Sigman	WR	6-1	185	Sr.	Montmorenci
84	Justin Sinz	TE	6-4	251	So.	Edgar, WI
74	Connor Snapp	OG	6-7	324	Sr.	Valparaiso
55	Brandon Taylor	DT	6-1	280	Jr.	Aventura, FL
19	Caleb TerBush	QB	6-5	225	Sr.	Metamora, IL
12	Tommie Thomas	WR	6-1	195	Sr.	Robbins, IL
17	Charles Torwudzo	WR	6-4	214	So.	Brownsburg
14	Ryan Ullrich	K	5-9	165	Fr.	Indianapolis
42	Cody Webster	P	6-1	205	Jr.	Harrisburg, PA
31	Armstead Williams	LB	6-3	210	Fr.	Monroeville, PA
6	Frankie Williams	DB	5-9	180	Fr.	Tampa, FL
82	Crosby Wright	TE	6-3	248	Sr.	Carbondale, IL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
C. TerBush	13	130.7	171	277	6	61.7	1905	13	50	146.5
R. Marve	10	107.7	61	109	5	56.0	633	4	33	63.3

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
J. Siller	13	50	474	9.5	1	50	36.5
A. Edison	13	44	584	13.3	3	35	44.9
O.J. Ross	12	33	356	10.8	3	28	29.7

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
R. Bolden	12	148	710	36	674	4.6	6	39	56.2
A. Shavers	12	111	534	15	519	4.7	6	44	43.2
A. Hunt	12	32	291	12	279	8.7	2	50	23.2

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: J. Holland 94, D. Beckford 91, W. Lucas 82
Tackles for loss: K. Short 17, J. Holland 10.5, W. Lucas 10
Sacks: K. Short 6.5, D. Beckford 3, G. Gooden 3, B. Gaston 3
Interceptions: R. Allen 3, A. Evans 2, J. Johnson 2, G. Gooden 2

NOTEBOOK

Ralph Bolden knows what's coming each step of the way.

That's what happens when you have torn the ACL in your right knee three times, all since your senior year in high school.

"I know how far to push it, how far not to push it," the Purdue running back said. "Swelling presents a new challenge every day, but that's pretty much it."

Whether Bolden can recover in time for the 2012 season remains a question. He has been the Boilermakers' top running back in two of the last three seasons, missing 2010 because of his second ACL injury.

Bolden, who was able to run at practice and do some agility drills during spring practice, was optimistic he would be able to play the full season. Coach **Danny Hope** shared Bolden's attitude.

"I'm optimistic in some ways because Ralph is optimistic," Hope said.

"I look at where he was at last year coming off the second ACL. At the beginning of the season, he was a good player for us, but he was out of football conditioning. Football conditioning is a lot like fight conditioning. You have to get in some before you get yourself in the right type of shape.

"We had to play him into shape early in the season. We gave him a limited amount of reps and toward the end of the season, we had taken the limitations off of him and I thought he was a great player again."

• **Ishmael Aristide** and **Rob Henry** finished second in their bid for student body president and vice-president, respectively.

"We took it serious from the beginning, but we learned sometimes you win, sometimes you lose," Aristide said. "We knew that going in. Life isn't perfect. It teaches you to be resilient."

Henry knows about bouncing back. The quarterback is recovering from a knee injury suffered last August and is working his way back into shape. There are parallels between the election and football.

"Things don't always end up the way you want them to — case in point my knee last year," Henry said. "In the end, everything will be just fine."

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"Danny Hope has done a terrific job recruiting. He's upgraded his talent every year since taking over for Joe Tiller. I think he took over the least talented of all of Joe Tiller's team. Gary Nord, the offensive coordinator, has done a terrific job with the offense being multiple and yet giving them some form of run identity.

"The other really impressive thing about Purdue is the defense. Their defensive line is terrific. Kawann Short plays low with his pads, plays underneath the blockers and is strong. Their secondary is skilled. So, Danny has done two things. He has developed the run game on offense and he's developed defense with personnel. He's had three different defensive coordinators. I think that has to settle down for them to really take off. I think Purdue can definitely be in the hunt for the Leaders."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Robert Marve
Photo by Joe Robbins

"There were some scores that were lopsided, some numbers that were lopsided. When you give up big plays, sometimes it's because you're going against great teams with great players, but sometimes it's a result of not doing what you're supposed to do as well as you're supposed to do it."

In 2011, Purdue allowed a program-record 62 points at Wisconsin and finished ninth among Big Ten teams in total defense in conference games. The Boilermakers allowed more than 500 yards against Notre Dame, Michigan and the Badgers.

If the Boilermakers are to reverse those big-yardage games, it starts up front. Led by Kawann Short, a potential first-round NFL Draft pick in 2013, Purdue has the talent and experience to limit opposing teams. Bruce Gaston returns at the other tackle spot, and Ryan Russell has the potential to become the program's next top defensive end.

The secondary is loaded with experience, led by cornerbacks Josh Johnson, Ricardo Allen and Normondo Harris. Newcomers Taylor Richards and Frankie Williams are expected to see plenty of playing time, and Max Charlot brings experience to the safety spot.

Even Purdue's quarterbacks realize the talent in the secondary.

"They've got a lot of fast, little guys over there," sixth-year senior Robert Marve said. "You have to be careful with them.

"I feel like that's one of our deepest spots. When you can rotate JJ, Ricardo, there are four or five that can start. When you have all those guys on the field together, you have to be careful where you're throwing."

But the lack of depth at linebacker is something to watch.

Will Lucas returns, and Dwayne Beckford is expected back after missing the bowl game and spring practice because of a suspension. Hope moved quarterback Sean Robinson to linebacker before spring practice, looking to beef up the numbers and also add another potential playmaker to the mix.

SPECIAL TEAMS

This area has been an emphasis from Day 1 during Hope's tenure. The investment paid off last year.

Paced by then-freshman Raheem Mostert, Purdue led the nation in

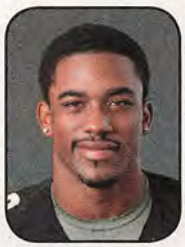
BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

DT Kawann Short

He's the anchor of the defensive line, taking on double teams and being a disruptive force. ... Had 54 tackles and posted team-highs with 17.0 tackles for loss and 6.5 sacks. ... Blocked field goals against Middle Tennessee and Notre Dame last season. ... Forced and recovered a fumble at Rice and also had a season-high 11 tackles. ... Has blocked four field goals in career. ... Has 13 sacks in the past two seasons. ... Was selected a team co-captain before junior year.

EMERGING STAR



WR Raheem Mostert

Led the nation in kickoff returns and had a touchdown return against Western Michigan in the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl victory. ... Dynamic athlete who is a game-changer. ... Set single-game record with 206 kick return yards against Wisconsin. ... Finished with 837 return yards, the third most in a single season in school history. ... Had four returns of 70 yards or more. ... Was selected the team's special teams captain this spring.

TOP NEWCOMER

DB Frankie Williams

Redshirted last season, but coach Danny Hope wanted to play the Florida native toward the end of the season. ... Williams is the top candidate to return punts this season. ... At Coral Glades High School in Tampa, he set a school record with nine kickoff and punt returns for touchdowns, breaking the mark that had been held by current Kansas City Chief Javier Arenas. ... Can play cornerback or safety.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	27.8	58
Rushing	136.1	75
Passing	255.3	34
Total	391.3	53
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	29.1	89
Rushing	173.4	94
Passing	203.2	37
Total	376.6	69
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 5	- 0.42	87

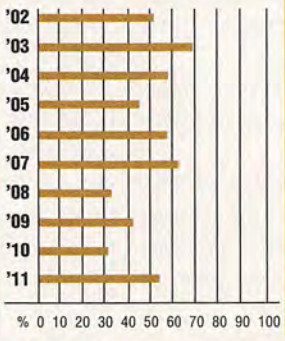
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	19.7	105
Rushing	160.8	49
Passing	150.8	112
Total	311.6	104
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	28.8	74
Rushing	137.9	43
Passing	231.1	85
Total	369.0	62
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
- 6	- 0.50	88

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.9	60
Rushing	181.6	33
Passing	195.2	83
Total	376.9	71
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	26.9	63
Rushing	174.9	82
Pass	221.0	53
Total	395.9	73
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	49

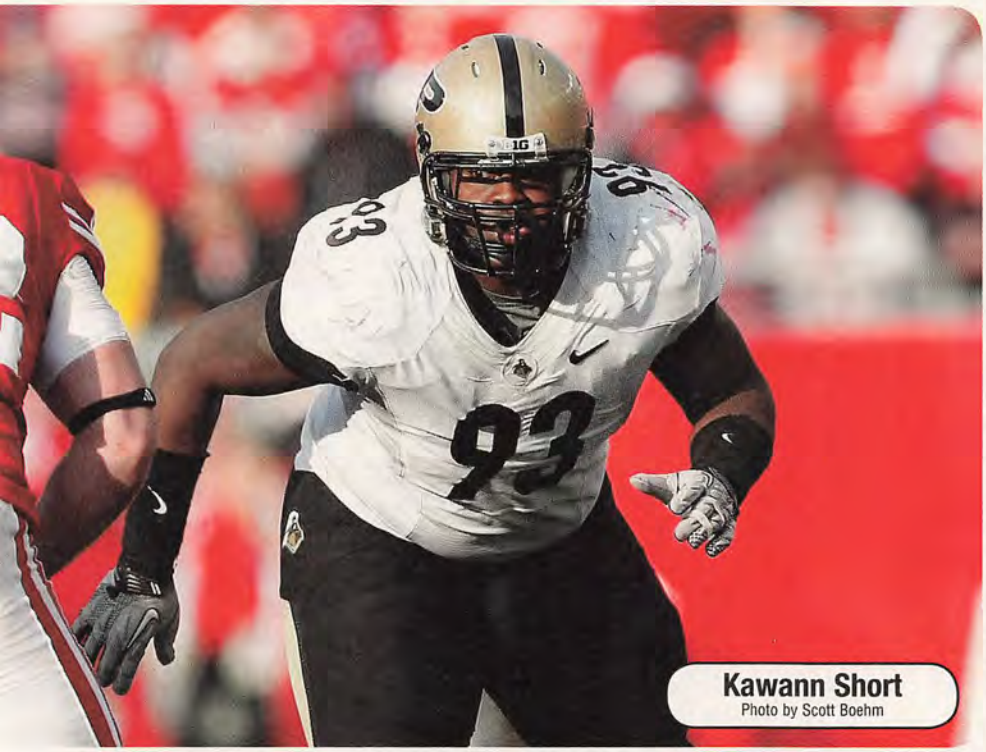
10-YEAR WINNING TREND



RESULTS
7-6, 4-4

W	MIDDLE TENNESSEE	27-24
L	at Rice	22-24
W	SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	59-0
L	NOTRE DAME	10-38
W	MINNESOTA	45-17
L	at Penn State	18-23
W	ILLINOIS	21-14
L	at Michigan	14-36
L	at Wisconsin	17-62
W	OHIO STATE (OT)	26-23
L	IOWA	21-31
W	at Indiana	33-25
	Little Caesars Bowl	
W	vs. Western Michigan	37-32

PLAYER PROFILE



Kawann Short
Photo by Scott Boehm

Short Thinks Big After Bypassing NFL Draft

Kawann Short's goals are clearly in front of him now.

Purdue's talented defensive tackle flirted with the idea of leaving school early and going to the NFL. But the East Chicago, Ind., native is back for one more season and is looking for big things.

"To come back and be one of those top defensive linemen in the nation, as far as competing against the guys from the SEC," Short said of his season goals.

Short submitted paperwork to the NFL Draft Advisory Board, which is comprised of a group of general managers and personnel directors. They projected Short as a third-round selection based solely on game film.

Shortly after this year's NFL Draft ended, Short's name was already mentioned as a 2013 first-round pick.

"I feel like I can do a lot better if I come back and do what I need to do to get there — being more consistent and being a little stronger and having that ability to come out of the game and not look tired," Short said.

Short had 54 tackles last season and collected a team-high 17 tackles for loss, including 6.5 sacks. He also blocked two kicks en route to first-team All-Big Ten honors.

"Even though he had a heck of a year, I think he can play a lot better and he can be a dominant player on the national level," Purdue coach Danny Hope said. "He has to continue working hard and get himself in great shape and play all out every down."

Short may receive an opportunity to showcase his versatility under new defensive coordinator Tim Tibesar. At Kansas State, Tibesar ran a 3-4 defense, which is different from Purdue's normal alignment.

In 2011, Short (6-3, 310) played several snaps at defensive end.

"I wasn't just being that big guy in the middle clogging things up," he said. "If I can move around, it's a good thing. Moving out to end is pretty big as far as speed. Coaches believe I have the speed to get around my man."

Although his family was prepared to support whichever decision he made, Short said earning a degree remains one of his top priorities.

"My senior year in high school, I had to do a lot just to get into college," Short said. "My mom wants to see me graduate and walk across the stage. That was one of the biggest reasons — to graduate and do everything right."

kickoff returns last season. Mostert was No. 1 in the country and gives the Boilermakers an instant scoring threat.

Cody Webster holds down the No. 1 punter spot, but replacing kicker Carson Wiggs is this unit's biggest challenge. Wiggs hit the five longest field goals in program history. Freshmen Paul Griggs and Thomas Meadows are expected to battle in camp to take over Wiggs' spot.

Purdue also showed it improved its coverage units by adding more speed last season; that trend should continue into 2012.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

You can split Purdue's schedule into two parts.

The good news: Five of the first six games are at home and the only road trip is two hours north to Notre Dame.

The bad news: Four of the last six games are away from Ross-Ade Stadium.

If Purdue takes care of its home games, Hope's team has a chance to make some noise in the race for the Leaders Division title. Otherwise, it will be an uphill climb.

Even the non-conference schedule works in the Boilermakers' favor. One week after opening against Eastern Kentucky, Purdue travels to Notre Dame, seven days following the Irish's trip to Ireland to face Navy.

Early Big Ten tests against Michigan and Wisconsin at home are key matchups in 2012.

— Mike Carmin

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	EASTERN KENTUCKY	7-5
Sept. 8	at Notre Dame	8-5
Sept. 15	EASTERN MICHIGAN	6-6
Sept. 29	MARSHALL	7-6
Oct. 6	MICHIGAN	11-2
Oct. 13	WISCONSIN	11-3
Oct. 20	at Ohio State	6-7
Oct. 27	at Minnesota	3-9
Nov. 3	PENN STATE	9-4
Nov. 10	at Iowa	7-6
Nov. 17	at Illinois	7-6
Nov. 24	INDIANA	1-11

NORTHERN ILLINOIS | HUSKIES

MAC rank: 4 Record: 11-3 MAC record: 7-1 (T-1st, West) Stadium: Brigham Field at Huskie Stadium (30,076)

By Bob Narang

Photo by Mike DiNovo-US PRESSWIRE

"This team is really a flip of last year's team."

— Coach Dave Doeren

HUSKIES at a GLANCE

COACH: Dave Doeren: At Northern Illinois and overall: 11-3, 1 year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Dunbar
CO-DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Jay Niemann, Ryan Nielsen

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2011
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2007
RETURNING STARTERS: 13, 3 offense, 8 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Jordan Lynch, RB Akeem Daniels, WR Martel Moore, DE Sean Progar, MLB Devon Butler, SS Jimmie Ward, FS Dechane Durante

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Lynch is cut in the same mold of former QB starter Chandler Harnish. Moore has the potential to be one of the best receivers in the conference. The defense is back to the league-leading form under former coach Jerry Kill. The Huskies should stop teams this year and become more defensive-oriented.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: The Huskies return one starter, left guard Logan Pegram, on the offensive line. The offense has yet to find a replacement for running back Jasmin Hopkins. The defense is solid, but a lack of depth at linebacker could be an issue.

OFFENSE

The Huskies averaged 38.3 points per game the past two years under quarterback Chandler Harnish. Don't expect the Huskies to put up those numbers in 2012, but junior quarterback Jordan Lynch inherits an offense with several talented wide receivers and tight ends.

Lynch is an athletic player with the speed to make opposing defenses respect his running ability. Last year, Lynch got valuable playing time, which included leading a second-quarter touchdown drive in a bowl win over Arkansas State, after Harnish sat out a few series with an injury.

Senior left guard Logan Pegram is the lone returning starter on the line, and there was no clear-cut starter at running back coming out of the spring. Leighton Settle, Akeem Daniels and Jamal Womble will form a running back by committee until a player steps up to shoulder the brunt of the carries.

Wide receivers Martel Moore and Perez Ashford join tight ends Jason Schepler, Luke Eakes and Tim Semisch in giving Lynch a number of targets in the spread offense.

DEFENSE

The defense turned into a strength late last season after a poor start. The return of 2010 starting linebackers Devon Butler and Tyrone Clark to the field adds to a promising core of returnees. Defensive ends Sean Progar and Alan Baxter help form a deep, but inexperienced defensive line.

Butler, who had 80 tackles in 2010, is fully recovered from an off-campus shooting incident last year and participated in spring practice. Clark joins outside linebacker Jamaal Bass in giving the Huskies a talented trio in their 4-3 defense.

There's plenty of depth in the secondary, with strong safety Jimmie Ward and free safety Dechane Durante headlining the strength of the defense.

Ward, Durante and cornerbacks Rashaan Melvin, Jhony Faustin and Demetrius Stone combined to break up 27 passes and rack up 10 of NIU's 13 interceptions last season.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kicker Mathew Sims added his name to the Huskies' long list of successful kickers after drilling the game-winning field goal in the Mid-American Conference championship game victory over Ohio.

Punter Ryan Neir has one of the best hang times in the conference but must work on his distance. Tommylee Lewis, a speedy and electric sophomore, can take over a game with his kickoff and punt returns.

OVERVIEW

Second-year coach Dave Doeren won NIU's first MAC title in 28 years in 2011. The Huskies, bolstered by a nine-game winning streak and back-to-back 11-3 records, broke ground in the spring for an indoor practice facility. The program is shaping up to become an annual juggernaut.

The 2012 team might experience a slight drop-off after losing key members on offense, but a schedule with six on-campus games may help the Huskies make another run at a conference title. In a reversal of last year, the offense is going to need some time to get familiar with several new faces and new offensive coordinator Mike Dunbar.

TOP NEWCOMER

DT Ken Bishop: The junior college transfer is expected to be a regular in the interior of the NIU's 4-3 defense. He enrolled in school in January and worked his way up the depth chart with a solid spring.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	6	Jordan Lynch	6-0	216	Jr.
RB	23	Leighton Settle	5-9	199	Jr.
WR	**1**	**Martel Moore***	**6-0**	**183**	**Sr.**
WR	**7**	**Perez Ashford***	**5-11**	**182**	**Sr.**
SR	80	Tommylee Lewis	5-7	155	So.
TE	87	Jason Schepler	6-2	274	Sr.
LT	78	Ryan Brown	6-6	283	So.
LG	**70**	**Logan Pegram***	**6-3**	**306**	**Sr.**
C	59	Michael Gegner	6-3	283	So.
RG	66	Matt Battaglia	6-3	287	Sr.
RT	79	Matt Krempel	6-5	307	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**95**	**Sean Progar***	**6-2**	**254**	**Sr.**
DT	98	Frank Boenzi	6-1	304	So.
NG	**99**	**Nabal Jefferson***	**6-0**	**287**	**Sr.**
DE	**90**	**Alan Baxter***	**6-0**	**240**	**Sr.**
LB	36	Tyrone Clark	5-10	219	Sr.
LB	9	Devon Butler	5-10	232	Jr.
LB	**6**	**Jamaal Bass***	**5-10**	**225**	**So.**
CB	**11**	**Rashaan Melvin***	**6-2**	**193**	**Sr.**
CB	**19**	**Demetrius Stone***	**5-10**	**203**	**Sr.**
SS	**15**	**Jimmie Ward***	**5-11**	**192**	**Jr.**
FS	**21**	**Dechane Durante***	**6-2**	**196**	**So.**
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**99**	**Mathew Sims***	**5-9**	**181**	**Jr.**
P	**18**	**Ryan Neir***	**6-3**	**208**	**Sr.**

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	vs. Iowa (Chicago)
Sept. 8	TENNESSEE-MARTIN
Sept. 15	at Army
Sept. 22	KANSAS
Sept. 29	CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 6	at Ball State
Oct. 13	BUFFALO
Oct. 20	at Akron
Oct. 27	at Western Michigan
Nov. 3	MASSACHUSETTS
Nov. 14	TOLEDO
Nov. 23	at Eastern Michigan

2011 RESULTS

W	ARMY	49-26
L	at Kansas	42-45
L	WISCONSIN	7-49
W	CAL POLY	47-30
L	at Central Michigan	41-48
W	KENT STATE	40-10
W	WESTERN MICHIGAN	51-22
W	at Buffalo	31-30
W	at Toledo	63-60
W	at Bowling Green	45-14
W	BALL STATE	41-38
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	18-12
	MAC Championship Game	
W	vs. Ohio	23-20
	GoDaddy.com Bowl	
W	vs. Arkansas State	38-20

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring Offense	38.3	12
Rushing Offense	234.1	12
Passing Offense	241.9	51
Total Offense	476.0	11
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring Defense	30.3	85
Rushing Defense	167.4	73
Pass Defense	247.9	89
Total Defense	415.2	88
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 6	+ 0.43	29

WISCONSIN BADGERS

For more coverage of the Badgers, visit wisconsin.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt Canada **DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Chris Ash, Charlie Partridge** **STADIUM: Camp Randall: 80,321**

AT A GLANCE

2011: 11-3 overall, 7-2 Big Ten (1st, Leaders)

COACH: Bret Bielema — At Wisconsin and overall: 60-19, 6 years

RETURNING STARTERS: 10; 4 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Danny O'Brien, RB Montee Ball, WR Jared Abbrederis, TE Jacob Pedersen, LT Ricky Wagner, DE David Gilbert, LB Chris Borland, LB Mike Taylor

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The depth at tailback is as good as any team in the country, and the offensive line and tight ends are strong, as usual. This should be one of the best linebacker groups in years, with difference-makers in Borland and Taylor.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Redshirt freshman walk-on Joel Stave looks like the only challenger to O'Brien at quarterback. The wide receivers struggled in the spring with Abbrederis out. The defense must find a pass rush, or else the secondary could be an issue.

KEY LOSSES: QB Russell Wilson, WR Nick Toon, C Peter Konz, OL Kevin Zeitler, P Brad Nortman

OVERVIEW: The talent drain in the past two seasons has been considerable, with 11 players drafted, including three in the first round. Even so, the Badgers remain the favorite to win the Leaders Division (with Ohio State ineligible) and are trying to claim a third straight Big Ten title for first time in school history.

Badgers Poised to Win Third Straight Big Ten Title

The comparisons are inevitable and unavoidable.

As a transfer quarterback, coming to Wisconsin from the ACC — and eligible to play right away because he graduated — Danny O'Brien knows the standard he will be measured against: Russell Wilson.

In his only season as Wisconsin's starter in 2011, after transferring from North Carolina State, Wilson had the best season ever by a Badgers quarterback. He set an NCAA record for passing efficiency (191.78), with 33 touchdowns and four interceptions.

"Obviously, our paths are kind of similar," O'Brien, formerly of Maryland, said after picking the Badgers over Penn State, Vanderbilt and Mississippi. "But it's a new year, a new season; 2012 has yet to be written and I'm a completely different player. ... So, I don't compare myself to him at all."

Leave that to everybody else. While Wilson was a dynamic playmaker, capable of making big plays with his arm and legs, O'Brien is more of a pocket passer.

"Russell is a great quarterback, but they are two different types of quarterbacks," said Todd Willert, who was O'Brien's high school coach at East Forsyth in Kernersville, N.C.

"Russell, obviously, is a lot more of an athlete than Danny; there are no ifs, ands or buts about that. I think Danny, being a student of the game, will help him. That makes up for some of the athleticism he doesn't have."

O'Brien (6-3, 215) was named the ACC's Rookie of the Year in a pro-style offense as a redshirt freshman in 2010. But he was a fish out of water in the spread the Terrapins ran last season after a coaching change.

The Badgers would be elated if O'Brien is comparable to Scott Tolzien, an efficient "game manager" who started in 2009 and 2010 and spent last season with the San Francisco 49ers.

Like a year ago, the Badgers had a gaping hole at quarterback. The only healthy bodies in the spring were redshirt freshman walk-on Joel Stave and sophomore Joe Brennan, who was Wilson's backup last season.

Two other significant differences between O'Brien and his predecessor: He was due to arrive on campus in June, a month earlier than Wilson's schedule a year earlier; and O'Brien has two years of eligibility remaining.

"He's the smartest player I've ever coached in my life," Willert said. "They're going to get a guy who's a student of the game, and that's why so many coaches through this process really wanted him."

OFFENSE

Don't be fooled by new offensive coordinator Matt Canada's most recent coaching stops at Indiana and Northern Illinois. At both places, Canada ran spread offenses, which have become anathema to the folks at Wisconsin.

While other schools work to get more receivers on the field, the Badgers scheme to use extra tight ends and even additional linemen.

So, Canada's first order of business after getting hired was to assure the faithful some things won't change. "There's no question about the philosophy of Wisconsin," he said. "I'm just joining and being part of that philosophy."

The offensive focus will remain on beefy linemen and arguably the deepest group of tailbacks in the nation, led by senior Montee Ball, a 2011 Heisman Trophy finalist.

But despite the hard-earned reputation for bludgeoning opponents into submission, when Wisconsin's offense

Montee Ball
Photo by Joe Robbins

came close to reaching nirvana the last two seasons, it was with the help of talented quarterbacks.

The Badgers set a school record in 2010, averaging 41.5 points per game with Scott Tolzien pulling the trigger, then eclipsed it last season with Russell Wilson at the helm, averaging 44.1 points. Former coordinator Paul Chryst parlayed that into the head coaching job at Pittsburgh.

Canada's chances of matching that productivity in his first year likely depend on his skills as quarterbacks coach. Transfer Danny O'Brien from Maryland is the likely starter and will have to be brought up to speed quickly.

Making Canada's job easier is the return of Ball, who had a nation's best 1,923 rushing yards last season. Ball wasn't happy with his third-round NFL draft projection and also spoke of the four-year commitment he made to the school in his decision to return.

"My character speaks for itself," he said. "I'm true to my word."

Junior backup James White has rushed for 1,765 yards and a 5.9 per-carry average in two years, while redshirt freshman Melvin Gordon had a strong spring and is regarded as the next great back.

The Badgers must replace two All-Americans in the line, but what else is new? They had the same issue a year ago and didn't miss a beat. Senior left tackle Ricky Wagner will try to add to a line tradition that includes four All-Americans, two first-rounders and five overall draft picks in two years.

The receivers are a big question mark behind junior Jared Abbrederis. But a strong group of tight ends, led by junior Jacob Pedersen, could lessen the concern. Canada likes the mismatches tight ends create.

"Everything in our business is just trying to find matchups, trying to find 'where's Waldo,' where's the guy you're going to go after?" he said. "Tight ends are those players that allow you to do that, in different formations."

DEFENSE

Wisconsin ranked 15th nationally in total defense in 2011 (316.4 yards per game), but the good mark was deceiving: only one regular-season opponent finished in the top 50 in total offense (Northern Illinois at No. 11).

The defense was exposed in the Rose Bowl, as Oregon's fourth-ranked offense rolled up 621 yards in a 45-38 victory.

The most glaring issue was matching up with the Ducks' speed, which was evident on three long scoring plays — a 54-yard pass and runs of 64 and 91 yards. That was a recurring theme during the season for a defense that played exceptionally well other than a few critical breakdowns.

Two of the worst occurred in back-to-back last-second losses to Michigan State

Chris Borland
Photo by Scott Boehm/Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Danny O'Brien	Jr.	Maryland transfer arrives amid high hopes.	Joel Stave, Fr.
RB	Montee Ball*	Sr.	Nation's top returning career rusher (3,310 yards).	James White, Jr.
WR	Jared Abbrederis*	Jr.	933 receiving yards fifth-most by UW sophomore.	Isaiah Williams, So.
WR	Jeff Duckworth	Jr.	Had a big catch in Big Ten title game.	Chase Hammond, So.
TE	Jacob Pedersen	Jr.	Has 10 TDs among 38 career receptions.	Austin Traylor, Fr.
TE	Sam Arneson	So.	Is a receiving threat in addition to blocker.	Brian Wozniak, Jr.
LT	Ricky Wagner*	Sr.	Started 14 games at LT after moving from RT.	Jonathan Coon, Fr.
LG	Ryan Groy	Jr.	Player host on Danny O'Brien's visit.	Ray Ball, Fr.
C	Travis Frederick*	Jr.	One of strongest and smartest players on team.	Dan Voltz, Fr.
RG	Robert Burge	Sr.	Walk-on will be pushed in camp.	Kyle Costigan, So.
RT	Rob Havenstein	So.	Missed spring following shoulder surgery.	Tyler Marz, Fr.
K	Kyle French	So.	Handled FGs for four games due to injuries.	Jack Russell, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Brendan Kelly*	Sr.	Strong motor; finally stayed healthy.	Tyler Dippel, Jr.
DT	Ethan Hemer*	Jr.	Earned scholarship after 20 starts last two years.	Jordan Kohout, Jr.
DT	Beau Allen	Jr.	323-pounder with explosive first step.	Warren Herring, So.
DE	David Gilbert	Jr.	Three sacks in four games last season.	Pat Muldoon, Jr.
LB	Mike Taylor*	Sr.	Third nationally with 150 tackles.	Derek Landisch, So.
LB	Chris Borland*	Jr.	Tied for No. 12 nationally with 19 TFLs.	Marcus Trotter, So.
LB	Ethan Armstrong	Jr.	Coming off surgeries on both hips.	A.J. Fenton, Jr.
CB	Devin Smith	Sr.	Gets a senior re-do following foot injury.	Peniel Jean, So.
CB	Marcus Cromartie*	Sr.	Became a starter after Devin Smith's injury.	Darius Hillary, Fr.
SS	Shelton Johnson*	Sr.	Four picks, three in final four games.	Michael Caputo, Fr.
FS	Dezmen Southward	Jr.	Was the backup strong safety last season.	Michael Trotter, So.
P	Drew Meyer	Fr.	Must improve consistency from spring.	Stephen Salata, Fr.

*Returning Starter

BADGERS RECRUITING 2012 rivals.com

3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Vince Biegel
With a father who was an all-conference performer at BYU, Biegel has the linebacker position in is blood. The 6-3, 225-pound prospect has a range of physical tools, but it is his feel for the position and ability to see plays before they develop which set him apart as a standout linebacker.

Dan Voltz
The 6-4, 288-pound Voltz is a squarely-built interior offensive lineman who plays light on his feet and has a nice mean streak. A mid-year graduate, Voltz was able to work out with the Badgers in the spring and may have a shot to see the field as early as his freshman year.

Bart Houston
Houston comes from one of the country's winningest high school football programs in Concord (Calif.) De La Salle. He is perfect for the Wisconsin offense in that he is a great distributor of the football who won't make the big mistakes; and coming from De La Salle, he knows how to win.

THE SLEEPER

Hugs Etienne
With a name like "Hugs," you'd better have some game and the Plantation, Fla., native has no issues there. He is prototypically built for the cornerback position, and brings plenty of that "southern speed" Big Ten teams are always looking to infuse their roster with.

Committments	12
Average Stars	3.08
★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	3
★★★☆☆	7
★★☆☆☆	2
Total Stars	37
National Rank: NR	Big Ten: 9

2013 NEEDS: Wisconsin's disastrous finish to the 2012 class included losing out on two four-star offensive tackle prospects in the final weeks before National Signing Day. Look for the Badgers to start off the 2013 class identifying top targets at that position, then turn their attention to the defensive side of the football where both the tackle and end positions need to be addressed. Good news for the Badgers is that the state of Wisconsin and nearby city of Chicago both feature deep talent pools at those positions in 2013.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Vince Biegel	LB	6-3	225	★★★★	Wisconsin Rapids, WI	Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Wisconsin...Rated as the nation's No. 3 outside linebacker...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Had 172 tackles, 21 sacks and three interceptions as a senior...Had 175 tackles and four interceptions as a junior...Chose Wisconsin over BYU, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota and Tennessee.

Hugs Etienne	DB	5-11	164	★★★	Plantation, FL	South Plantation

Rated as the No. 78 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 42 cornerback...Chose Wisconsin over Bowling Green, FAU, Kansas, Northern Illinois, Wake Forest and West Virginia...Recorded 88 tackles, six interceptions in his career.

Arthur Goldberg	DT	6-3	270	★★★	Pittsburgh, PA	Mt. Lebanon

Rated as the No. 39 prospect in West Virginia by Rivals.com...Chose Wisconsin over Cincinnati, Connecticut, Indiana, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Temple and West Virginia...Had 63 tackles, three sacks and seven tackles for loss as a senior.

Bart Houston	QB	6-4	215	★★★	Concord, CA	De La Salle

Rated as the No. 43 prospect in California by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 12 pro-style quarterback...Threw for 5,178 yards and 46 touchdowns in his career...Chose Wisconsin over Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, San Diego State, UCLA, Utah and Washington...Participated in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl.

Vonte Jackson	RB	6-0	200	★★★★	Kenosha, WI	Bradford

Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Wisconsin by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 21 running back...Chose Wisconsin over Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota and Northwestern.

Reggie Love	WR	6-3	205	★★★	Boca Raton, FL	Spanish River

Named all-state, all-area, all-county and team MVP as a senior...Caught 38 passes for 876 yards and 13 touchdowns in 2011...Also played basketball...Chose Wisconsin over Boston College, UCF and others.

Jake Meador	OL	6-7	320	★★★	Whiteland, IN	Whiteland

Rated as the No. 4 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 43 offensive tackle...Chose Wisconsin over Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisville, Missouri, SMU, Vanderbilt and others.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Reggie Mitchell	ATH	6-0	178	★★	Pittsburgh, PA	Shady Side Academy

First-team all-state and all-conference selection as a senior...Threw for 800 yards and rushed for 1,420 yards and 22 touchdowns in 2011.

Leo Musso	RB	5-10	190	★★	Waunakee, WI	Waunakee

Rated as the No. 8 prospect in Wisconsin by Rivals.com...Rushed for 5,531 yards and 87 touchdowns during his career...Three-time state champion.

D.J. Singleton	DB	6-2	195	★★★	Jersey City, NJ	St. Peter's Prep

Rated as the No. 16 prospect in New Jersey by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 27 safety...Chose Wisconsin over Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Miami, Michigan, Michigan State, Nebraska, North Carolina, Rutgers, Syracuse, Temple and Tennessee.

Dan Voltz	OL	6-4	288	★★★★	Barrington, IL	Barrington

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in Illinois...Rated as the nation's No. 8 offensive guard...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Walker Williams	OL	6-7	320	★★★	Tacoma, WA	Tacoma Baptist

Rated as the No. 7 prospect in Washington by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 50 offensive tackle...Chose Wisconsin over Colorado, Ohio State, Oregon State, UCLA, Utah and Washington.

BADGERS SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
4	Jared Abbrederis	WR	6-2	180	Jr.	Wautoma
99	James Adeyanju	DL	6-2	250	Fr.	Chicago, IL
96	Beau Allen	DL	6-3	323	Jr.	Minnetonka, MN
36	Ethan Armstrong	LB	6-2	225	Jr.	Ottawa, IL
49	Sam Arneson	TE	6-4	255	So.	Merrill
28	Montee Ball	RB	5-11	212	Sr.	Wentzville, MO
71	Ray Ball	OL	6-7	326	Fr.	Columbus, OH
13	Lance Baretz	WR	5-11	194	Fr.	Franklin
	Vince Biegel	LB	6-3	225	Fr.	Wisconsin Rapids
44	Chris Borland	LB	5-11	250	Jr.	Kettering, OH
11	Joe Brennan	QB	6-3	213	So.	Audubon, NJ
5	Jon Budmayr	QB	6-0	195	Jr.	Woodstock, IL
64	Robert Burge	OL	6-7	320	Sr.	Holmen
42	Cody Byers	LB	6-2	220	So.	Centerville, OH
86	Sherard Cadogan	FB	6-3	236	So.	Washington Township, NJ
37	Michael Caputo	DB	6-1	205	Fr.	Imperial, PA
65	Jonathan Coon	OL	6-7	308	Fr.	Franklin
54	Kyle Costigan	OL	6-4	305	So.	Wind Lake
14	Marcus Cromartie	DB	6-1	188	Sr.	Mansfield, TX
31	Connor Cummins	WR	6-1	191	So.	Kettering, OH
81	Brock DeCicco	TE	6-5	246	Jr.	Jefferson Hills, PA
63	Casey Dehn	OL	6-6	334	Jr.	Owatonna, MN
	Trent Denlinger	DE	6-6	266	Fr.	Cuba City
51	Tyler Dippel	DL	6-4	255	Jr.	Slinger
6	Kenzel Doe	WR	5-8	170	So.	Reidsville, NC
15	Jeff Duckworth	WR	6-0	212	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
30	Alex Erickson	WR	6-0	198	Fr.	Argyle
19	Hugs Etienne	DB	5-11	164	Fr.	Plantation, FL
22	Darius Feaster	DB	5-11	210	Jr.	Mequon
17	A.J. Fenton	LB	6-1	219	Jr.	Erie, PA
29	Terrance Floyd	DB	5-10	200	Fr.	Boynton Beach, FL
72	Travis Frederick	OL	6-4	328	Jr.	Sharon
23	Jordan Fredrick	WR	6-3	218	Fr.	Madison
94	Kyle French	K	6-1	193	So.	Menomonee Falls
19	Manasseh Garner	WR	6-2	213	Jr.	Pittsburgh, PA
32	Devin Gaulden	DB	5-10	190	So.	Miramar, FL
77	Bryce Gilbert	DL	6-1	304	So.	Brookfield
11	David Gilbert	DL	6-4	250	Jr.	Coral Springs, FL
	Arthur Goldberg	DT	6-3	270	Fr.	Mount Lebanon, PA
3	Melvin Gordon	RB	6-1	205	Fr.	Kenosha
29	Miles Groeschel	RB	5-10	210	Fr.	Fond Du Lac
79	Ryan Groy	OL	6-5	322	Jr.	Middleton
18	Nate Hammon	DB	6-1	210	Fr.	Milton
89	Chase Hammond	WR	6-5	212	So.	Youngstown, OH
50	Josh Harrison	DL	6-0	220	So.	Huber Heights, OH
17	Derek Hasanoglu	WR	6-4	222	Fr.	Waukesha
78	Rob Havenstein	OL	6-8	343	So.	Mount Airy, MD
41	Jesse Hayes	DL	6-3	250	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
87	Ethan Hemer	DL	6-6	305	Jr.	Medford
45	Warren Herring	DL	6-3	273	So.	Fairview Heights, IL
52	Nick Hill	LB	6-2	215	Jr.	Milwaukee
39	Darius Hillary	DB	5-11	185	Fr.	Cincinnati, OH
	Bart Houston	QB	6-4	215	Fr.	Dublin, CA
9	Vonte Jackson	RB	6-0	200	Fr.	Kenosha
21	Peniel Jean	DB	5-11	190	So.	West Palm Beach, FL
24	Shelton Johnson	DB	6-0	200	Sr.	Carrollton, TX
81	A.J. Jordan	WR	6-0	180	Fr.	Dayton, OH
48	Jake Keefer	LB	6-3	232	Fr.	Woodville
97	Brendan Kelly	DL	6-6	255	Sr.	Eden Prairie, MN
56	Riki Kodanko	OL	6-9	337	So.	Green Bay
91	Jordan Kohout	DL	6-3	292	Jr.	Waupun
30	Derek Landisch	LB	5-11	226	So.	Nashotah
73	Dallas Lewallen	OL	6-6	307	So.	Berlin
22	Jeffrey Lewis	RB	6-2	212	So.	Brookfield
	Reggie Love	WR	6-3	205	Fr.	Boynton Beach, FL
84	Austin Maly	TE	6-5	235	Fr.	Waunakee
61	Tyler Marz	OL	6-7	319	Fr.	Springfield, MN
87	Marquis Mason	WR	6-4	223	So.	Madison
75	Zac Matthias	OL	6-5	318	Jr.	Hemlock, MI
14	Drew McAdams	WR	6-0	198	So.	Madison
56	James McGuire	LS	6-1	203	So.	St. Paul, MN
60	Joseph McNamara	OL	6-1	315	So.	Pembroke Pines, FL
	Jake Meador	OL	6-7	320	Fr.	Whiteland, IN
90	Drew Meyer	P	6-2	182	Fr.	Hartland
	Reggie Mitchell	CB	6-0	178	Fr.	Pittsburgh, PA
92	Pat Muldoon	DL	6-3	258	Jr.	Mason, OH
	Leo Musso	ATH	5-10	190	Fr.	Waunakee
58	Jacob Ninneman	DL	6-1	285	So.	Oregon
	Danny O'Brien	QB	6-3	215	Jr.	Kernersville, NC
13	Conor O'Neill	LB	6-0	225	Jr.	Delray Beach, FL
48	Jacob Pedersen	TE	6-4	242	Jr.	Menominee, MI
31	Josh Peprah	LB	5-11	215	Jr.	McKinney, TX
10	Curt Phillips	QB	6-3	225	Sr.	Kingsport, TN
23	Jerry Ponio	DB	6-1	198	Jr.	Chicago, IL
	Matt Prell	TE	6-5	200	Fr.	Kenosha
	Jake Rademacher	LB	6-2	220	Fr.	Wales
57	Ben Ruechel	LB	6-1	232	So.	Oconto
	Jack Russell	K	6-0	160	Fr.	Waunakee
	Logan Schmidt	DE	6-5	250	Fr.	Gotham
	DJ Singleton	S	6-2	195	Fr.	Union, NJ
10	Devin Smith	DB	5-11	190	Sr.	Coppell, TX
12	Dezmen Southward	DB	6-2	210	Jr.	Sunrise, FL
2	Joel Stave	QB	6-5	223	Fr.	Greenfield
38	Eric Steffes	TE	6-3	235	Fr.	Mount Calvary
32	Jake Stengel	WR	6-3	198	Fr.	Sheboygan
26	Derek Straus	RB	6-0	230	Fr.	Waunakee
53	Mike Taylor	LB	6-2	222	Sr.	Ashwaubenon
46	Austin Traylor	TE	6-3	240	Fr.	Columbus, OH
59	Marcus Trotter	LB	6-0	222	So.	Racine
43	Michael Trotter	DB	6-0	210	So.	Racine
70	Dan Voltz	OL	6-4	288	Fr.	Barrington, IL
58	Ricky Wagner	OL	6-6	322	Sr.	West Allis
	Alex Walker	TE	6-5	220	Fr.	Glendale
34	Derek Watt	LB	6-2	225	Fr.	Pewaukee
20	James White	RB	5-10	197	Jr.	Fort Lauderdale, FL
8	Isaiah Williams	WR	6-1	194	So.	Miami, FL
	Walker Williams	OL	6-7	320	Fr.	Tacoma, WA
24	Fred Willis, Jr.	WR	6-2	198	So.	Milwaukee
85	Brian Wozniak	TE	6-4	260	Jr.	Loveland, OH
3	Jameson Wright	DB	6-1	190	So.	Fort Pierce, FL
74	Konrad Zagzebski	DL	6-3	258	So.	Weston
27	Kyle Zuleger	RB	5-11	191	Jr.	Appleton

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yards	TD	Long	Avg/G
R. Wilson	14	191.8	225	309	4	72.8	3175	33	66	226.8
J. Brennan	6	53.5	6	15	1	40.0	48	0	18	8.0

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yards	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
N. Toon	13	64	926	14.5	10	59	71.2
J. Abbrederis	14	55	933	17.0	8	51	66.6
J. Pedersen	14	30	356	11.9	8	55	25.4

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Long	Avg/G
M. Ball	14	307	1954	31	1923	6.3	33	54	137.4
J. White	13	141	741	28	713	5.1	6	49	54.8
R. Wilson	14	79	484	146	338	4.3	6	46	24.1

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M. Taylor 150, C. Borland 143, A. Henry 67
Tackles for loss: C. Borland 19, M. Taylor 9, L. Nzegwu 7
Sacks: L. Nzegwu 4.5 , B. Allen 4, B. Kelly 3, D. Gilbert 3
Interceptions: A. Henry 4, S. Johnson 4, A. Fenelus 4

NOTEBOOK

Backup tailback **James White** is too good to waste on the bench. The coaches devised ways in the spring to get White on the field together with starter **Montee Ball**. That move was highly endorsed by Ball.

"He can play somewhere and I'm glad to see they're utilizing him," Ball said.

• The Badgers have six new assistant coaches, including four on offense. The only holdover on offense is running backs coach **Thomas Hammock**. The biggest change under new offensive coordinator **Matt Canada** in the spring was simplified terminology.

• The spring roster included only nine seniors. One of them, quarterback **Curt Phillips**, is expected to apply for a sixth year after the season due to injuries.

"(A year) from now, we could possibly be starting as many as nine or 10 seniors on offense," coach **Bret Bielema** said. "So, the thing that gets exciting for me is not only does (this) year look promising, but the year after that. Our two-year forecast is pretty exceptional."

• Sophomore receiver **Chase Hammond** has undergone three surgeries on his right ankle and been told repeatedly he might not play again. If he can play, his 6-5 frame would provide a nice contrast with top wideout **Jared Abbrederis**, who is listed at 6-2.

"A big receiver, we can help out a lot," Hammond said. "We can stretch the field, we can make big plays in the red zone, (quarterbacks) can put it up high. ... I think that's a great addition to Jared's speed and what he can do."

• Five defensive starters missed all, or a large portion, of spring practices — including all three expected starting linebackers. That allowed some backups to shine, especially junior **A.J. Fenton**, who is the team's fastest linebacker.

• The offensive line is slowly rebuilding its depth. Junior **Casey Dehn** quit the team last fall to pursue track and field, but he was welcomed back in the winter. He worked as the No. 1 right tackle, due to injuries, in the spring. Sophomore **Dallas Lewallen** and junior **Zac Matthias** both missed last year following surgeries. They returned on a limited basis in the spring and could be in the mix for starting jobs in camp.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

"It's hard to believe they will put up the offensive numbers they did a year ago, but they're still very physical and they still have a Heisman Trophy candidate in Montee Ball. The quarterbacks played better in the spring game than the day I was there at practice. I don't necessarily think Danny O'Brien is going to be the same quarterback as Russell Wilson. That is an unreal expectation. I think the quarterback battle is going to be a significant battle in camp with Joel Stave. I'm of the belief that Stave could be the starter.

"This could be Bret Bielema's best defense. Depth on the defensive line is always an indication that the program is well-built. Bielema has been there a while now and you can tell by the defensive line. If you want to check the growth of a program, look at the defensive line."

— Gerry DiNardo of the Big Ten Network

Mike Taylor
Photo by Scott Boehm/Getty Images

and Ohio State. Losing on a 44-yard Hail Mary ricochet on the final play against the Spartans was bad enough; it was compounded when the Buckeyes scored the winning touchdown on a 40-yard completion with 20 seconds left.

Due to the stinging memory of those plays, most of the doubts are about a secondary expected to start three seniors and a junior. Cornerback Devin Smith gets a second crack at his senior year after redshirting. He was one of two defensive starters lost with foot injuries during non-conference play. The other was junior defensive end David Gilbert, who will be counted on to provide a pass rush.

Cornerback Marcus Cromartie was thrown into the fire and has the burn marks to prove it. A communication issue between him and strong safety Shelton Johnson led to the wide-open Ohio State receiver. Cromartie, now a senior, also struggled in the Rose Bowl, but held up OK otherwise.

Bielema went on record saying this could be his best safety combination as head coach. Johnson and junior Dezmen Southward are certainly the most athletic, but they must prove they are reliable enough to be in the right spots all of the time.

The strength of the defense is at linebacker, where senior Mike Taylor and junior Chris Borland return after finishing one-two in the Big Ten in total tackles.

The depth is good up front, with plenty of bodies but few difference-makers. Coaches are hoping junior defensive tackle Beau Allen emerges as an inside force to complement Gilbert, who rebroke his foot in practice before the Rose Bowl but should be ready for camp.

The defensive players have watched as prolific offenses gobbled up the headlines in the last two seasons. This defense wants to change that under second-year coordinator Chris Ash.

"That's one of Coach Ash's big things; we want people talking about the defense," junior linebacker A.J. Fenton said.

Just not like they were after the heartbreaking losses.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Change is coming after four years of punter Brad Nortman and kicker Philip Welch. Sophomore Kyle French got his feet wet when he filled in for an injured Welch early last season, making 3 of 5 field-goal attempts. Incoming freshman Jack Russell could handle kickoffs.

The dependable Nortman averaged 42.1

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Montee Ball

He tied Barry Sanders' single-season NCAA record with 39 touchdowns (33 rushing, six receiving) in 2011, scoring at least two in each of the first 13 games, another record. ... Needs 17 total TDs and 18 rushing TDs to tie NCAA career records. ... Catches ball extremely well, leading nation with 2,229 yards from scrimmage, including 306 receiving. ... Has not lost a fumble in 617 career touches. ... Put on five pounds, to 212, in the spring, increasing upper-body strength.

EMERGING STAR

WR Jared Abbrederis

Abbrederis, a former prep quarterback who walked on and earned his scholarship in January, takes over as the No. 1 receiver following senior Nick Toon's departure. ... Caught 55 passes for a team-high 933 yards last season, with eight TDs. ... Finished second in the Big Ten with 1,999 all-purpose yards, the sixth-best single season in school history. ... Missed school record by one yard with 346 all-purpose yards in Rose Bowl. ... Holds school records for career kickoff return average (25.8) and punt return average (14.1).

TOP NEWCOMER

QB Danny O'Brien

Played in 22 games, with 17 starts, at Maryland before transferring. ... Ranks fifth in Terps history with 29 career TD passes and eighth with 4,086 career passing yards. ... Record of 7-3 as a starter in pro-style offense in 2010, ranking fourth in the ACC in passing efficiency (134.5) while throwing for 2,438 yards. ... Dipped to 1,648 passing yards and 109.6 rating in seven starts after switch to spread offense in 2011.

Photo Courtesy of Wisconsing Athletic Communicaitons

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	31.8	25
Rushing	203.9	15
Passing	213.1	65
Total	416.9	30
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	21.8	33
Rushing	88.2	5
Passing	217.5	55
Total	305.7	17
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 3	+ 0.23	47

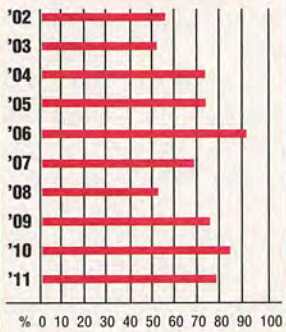
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	41.5	5
Rushing	245.7	12
Passing	199.5	75
Total	445.2	21
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.5	25
Rushing	127.9	26
Passing	193.9	26
Total	321.8	20
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 14	+ 1.08	6

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	44.1	6
Rushing	235.6	11
Passing	234.3	61
Total	469.9	14
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	19.0	13
Rushing	152.8	60
Pass	163.6	4
Total	316.4	15
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 16	+ 1.14	4

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

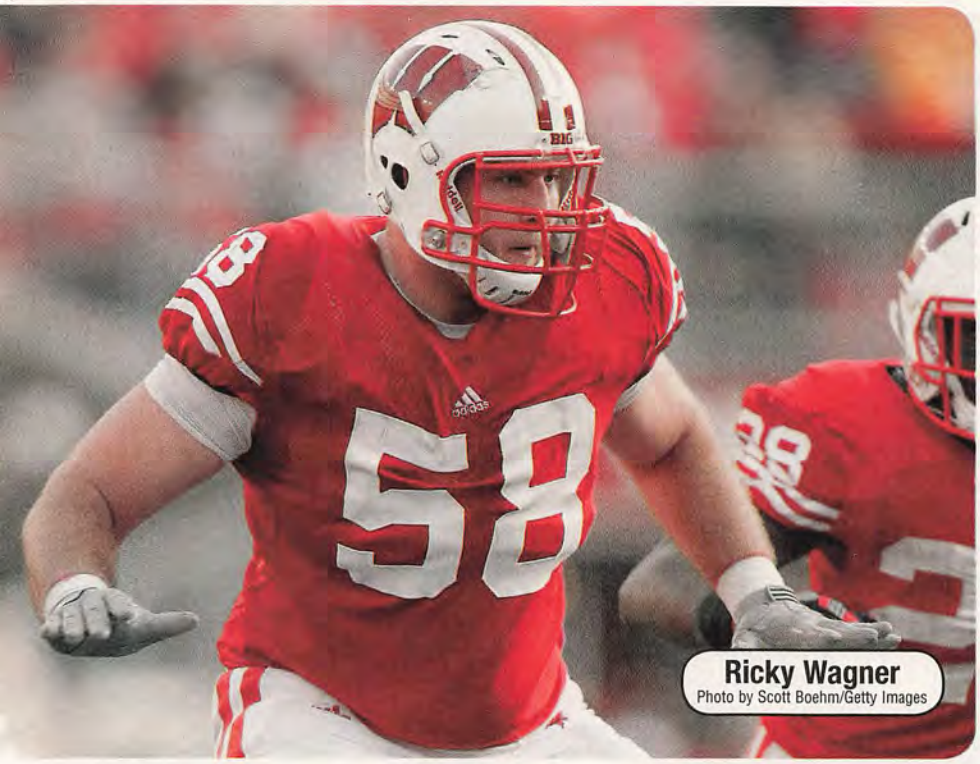


RESULTS

11-3, 7-2

W	UNLV	51-17
W	OREGON STATE	35-0
W	at Northern Illinois	49-7
W	SOUTH DAKOTA	59-10
W	NEBRASKA	48-17
W	INDIANA	59-7
L	at Michigan State	31-37
L	at Ohio State	29-33
W	PURDUE	62-17
W	at Minnesota	42-13
W	at Illinois	28-17
W	PENN STATE	45-7
	Big Ten Championship Game	
W	at Michigan State	42-39
	Rose Bowl	
L	vs. Oregon	38-45

PLAYER PROFILE



Ricky Wagner
Photo by Scott Boehm/Getty Images

Wagner is Writing Hollywood Ending

Coach Bret Bielema loves to mention how his first two starting left tackles at Wisconsin won the only two Outland Trophy awards in school history as seniors. Joe Thomas did it in 2006 and Gabe Carimi in 2010. Both went on to be first-round NFL draft picks.

Consider the bar set appropriately high for current senior left tackle Ricky Wagner. When Bielema met individually with Wagner prior to spring practices, the Outland topic came up again.

"I've been hearing that for the last two years," Wagner said. "I'm fine with it. To me, it's good that people hold me to those expectations, especially Coach Bielema. That's definitely a dream of mine. I'll be working toward that."

Wagner is typical of many of the team's great linemen of the past in that he is mammoth (6-6, 322) and a state product from West Allis, a suburb of Milwaukee. But Wagner's story is different than most.

He was a wide receiver as a sophomore at Nathan Hale High School and was a good enough basketball player to generate five Division I offers. He arrived at UW as a walk-on tight end, then put on 80 pounds and moved to tackle.

New offensive line coach Mike Markuson has coached some top left tackles, including Michael Oher at Mississippi. Markuson said Wagner has comparable talent to the top tackles he has coached.

"I've been around some great left tackles ... and this guy (Wagner) can play," Markuson said.

Oher was the inspiration for the 2009 film "The Blind Side" and was a first-round pick of the Baltimore Ravens. He was going into his senior year when Markuson went with Houston Nutt from Arkansas to Mississippi.

"Guys like Michael and Ricky, they've been groomed by good coaches," Markuson said. "It's my job not to screw them up and, hopefully, make (Wagner) a little better in some areas of his game."

Wagner is humble and soft-spoken and he recoiled at the suggestion his own story might make a good movie.

"I hope not," he said. "I don't think I could handle that."

Forget the Oscars, if Wagner is in contention for the Outland, it would be a Hollywood ending few could have envisioned when his college career started.

"I'm real proud that I came here as a walk-on and stayed true to the home state and I earned a scholarship," he said. "We'll see what the future holds."

yards in his career, third best in school history, and was a sixth-round draft pick by Carolina. Replacing him falls to redshirt freshman walk-on Drew Meyer. He was the only punter on the roster in the spring, when he struggled with consistency.

The return game is in the capable hands of Jared Abbrederis, who ranked third nationally in punt returns (15.8), the second-best average in school history. He's now the No. 1 receiver, so coaches might want to take away kickoff return to lighten his load. But he proved his value in the Rose Bowl with 346 all-purpose yards, including a school-record 201 kickoff return yards.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

The Badgers didn't play a true road game last season until the seventh game and it might have cost them, losing back-to-back road night games at Michigan State and Ohio State.

This year's non-conference schedule is typically weak, but at least it includes a trip to Oregon State in Week Two.

After a school-record five night games in 2011, the Badgers get only two this year, but one is huge — the Big Ten opener at Nebraska on Sept. 29. The other night game is home against Utah State on Sept. 15.

Revenge games against the Spartans and Buckeyes are both home. The road games in the watered-down Leaders Division are at improving Purdue, hapless Indiana and rebuilding Penn State.

— Tom Mulhern

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	NORTHERN IOWA	10-3
Sept. 8	at Oregon State	3-9
Sept. 15	UTAH STATE	7-6
Sept. 22	UTEP	5-7
Sept. 29	at Nebraska	9-4
Oct. 6	ILLINOIS	7-6
Oct. 13	at Purdue	7-6
Oct. 20	MINNESOTA	3-9
Oct. 27	MICHIGAN STATE	11-3
Nov. 10	at Indiana	1-11
Nov. 17	OHIO STATE	6-7
Nov. 24	at Penn State	9-4

OHIO | BOBCATS

MAC rank: 1 | Record: 10-4 | MAC record: 6-2 (1st, East) | Stadium: Peden Stadium (24,000)

By Bob Narang

Tyler Tettleton

Photo by Tomasso DeRosa

"We want to win conference championships, break into the Top 25. We've got lofty goals for this program." — Coach Frank Solich

BOBCATS at a GLANCE

COACH: Frank Solich — At Ohio: 50-40, 7 years;
OVERALL: 108-59, 13 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tim Albin
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jimmy Burrow

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1968
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2008
RETURNING STARTERS: 12; 5 offense, 6 defense, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Tyler Tettleton, WR Donte Foster, TE Jordan Thompson, LT John Prior, DT Carl Jones, MLB Keith Moore, K Matt Weller

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Tettleton had a stellar season running Ohio's offense last year. He has all the intangibles and talent to become an elite quarterback in the conference. The defense has plenty of playmakers along the line and in the secondary. Travis Carrie is a shutdown cornerback in a secondary packed with returnees.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Ohio's offensive success last year was based on the productive play of talented wideouts LaVon Brazil and Riley Dunlop, who are gone. The Bobcats don't have a reliable backup to Tettleton. A tough, hard-nosed QB, he must scale back his running to stay healthy.

OFFENSE

Ohio coach Frank Solich deployed a no-huddle, fast-paced offense for the first time in his career last year.

Led by quarterback Tyler Tettleton — the son of former major leaguer Mickey Tettleton — the Bobcats rode the new offense to unprecedented heights for the program.

Tettleton threw for 3,302 yards and 28 touchdowns and rushed for 658 yards and 10 touchdowns in 2011. The junior is a strong runner and accurate passer with a high upside, according to Solich.

The quarterback must adjust to losing the bulk of his wide receiving corps that helped camouflage a suspect running game. Junior wide receiver Donte Foster and Tyler Futrell have to pick up the slack left by the departures of LaVon Brazil and Riley Dunlop. Tettleton is the leading returning rusher, but that must change in 2012. The Bobcats have to keep the bruising Tettleton healthy. Junior tailbacks Beau Blankenship and Ryan Boykin will be key players to watch if the Bobcats want to take the next level in the program's development.

Ohio returns one of the best and biggest lines in the conference to help the Pistol-based offense from experiencing a big drop-off in production.

DEFENSE

The Bobcats return six defensive starters, but they have one big hole to fill. Noah Keller, who had a team-best 116 tackles in 2011, was the heart of the defense for the last four years at middle linebacker. Junior Keith Moore gets the first crack at filling Keller's shoes.

Otherwise, the Bobcats have one of their better defenses in terms of talent and experience under Solich, who enters his eighth season at Ohio after coaching at Nebraska. The secondary is stocked with returnees and players ready to capitalize on another year of experience in the 4-3 system. The Bobcats picked off 15 passes last year, with cornerback Travis Carrie snaring a team-high four passes.

Senior nose tackle Neal Huynh can clog the middle with his size (6-3, 301). Senior defensive ends Corey Hasting and Tremayne Scott must build upon solid showings last year. The Bobcats will try to raise their sacks after racking up 22 sacks in 14 games last year

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior Matt Weller is a reliable kicker inside the 40-yard line, making 19 of 20 field-goal attempts from that distance last season. But Weller's percentage dropped considerably past the 40, something that must be improved for this year. The punting job remains wide open entering the fall, with freshman Grant Venham the leading candidate.

OVERVIEW

The Bobcats have the talent and experience to compete for a third MAC East Division title in four years. Ohio is coming off its first 10-win season since 1968 and claimed the school's first-ever bowl win. A solid blend of returning skill players and a deep group of defensive and offensive linemen should bode well.

The Bobcats open at Penn State, with new coach Bill O'Brien. It could be an interesting matchup.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Chris Murray: A big-time recruit for the Bobcats. The Ohio coaching staff compares Murray's big-time playing ability to LaVon Brazil's. Murray, out of Tampa, Fla., has the talent to get plenty of playing time in his first year.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	4	**Tyler Tettleton***	6-0	200	Jr.
RB	22	Beau Blankenship	5-9	202	Jr.
WR	3	**Donte Foster***	6-1	193	Jr.
WR	81	Tyler Futrell	6-0	179	Sr.
WR	17	Bakari Bussey	6-2	205	Sr.
TE	88	**Jordan Thompson***	6-4	248	Sr.
LT	74	John Prior	6-6	301	Jr.
LG	64	Vince Carlotta	6-4	289	Sr.
C	76	**JD Bales***	6-5	307	Sr.
RG	77	**Eric Herman***	6-4	319	Sr.
RT	60	Ryan McGrath	6-6	304	Jr.
DEFENSE					
DE	94	Corey Hasting	6-1	261	Sr.
DT	89	**Carl Jones***	6-0	245	Sr.
NT	93	**Neal Huynh***	6-3	301	Sr.
DE	90	**Tremayne Scott***	6-3	257	Sr.
LB	34	**Jelani Woseley***	6-2	205	Sr.
LB	38	Keith Moore	6-0	219	Jr.
LB	10	A.J. Grady	6-1	198	So.
CB	2	Jamil Shaw	6-0	199	Jr.
CB	18	**Travis Carrie***	6-0	212	Sr.
SS	23	Xavier Hughes	6-1	171	Jr.
FS	13	**Gerald Moore***	6-1	205	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	49	**Matt Weller***	6-0	203	Sr.
P	56	Grant Venham	6-3	210	Fr.

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Penn State
Sept. 8	NEW MEXICO STATE
Sept. 15	at Marshall
Sept. 22	NORFOLK STATE
Sept. 29	at UMass
Oct. 6	BUFFALO
Oct. 13	AKRON
Oct. 27	at Miami (OH)
Nov. 1	EASTERN MICHIGAN
Nov. 7	BOWLING GREEN
Nov. 14	at Ball State
Nov. 23	at Kent State

2011 RESULTS

W	at New Mexico State	44-24
W	GARDNER-WEBB	30-3
W	MARSHALL	44-7
L	at Rutgers	26-38
W	KENT STATE	17-10
L	at Buffalo	37-38
L	BALL STATE	20-23
W	at Akron	37-20
W	TEMPLE	35-31
W	at Central Michigan	43-28
W	at Bowling Green	29-28
W	MIAMI (OH)	21-14
	MAC Championship Game	
L	vs. Northern Illinois	20-23
	Famous Idaho Potato Bowl	
W	vs. Utah State	24-23

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring Offense	30.5	41
Rushing Offense	200.3	23
Passing Offense	249.0	43
Total Offense	449.3	23
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring Defense	22.1	32
Rushing Defense	142.0	52
Pass Defense	219.0	52
Total Defense	361.0	46
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 0	+ 0.00	59

NOTRE DAME FIGHTING IRISH

For more coverage of the Fighting Irish, visit notredame.rivals.com

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chuck Martin **DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:** Bob Diaco, Kerry Cooks **STADIUM:** Notre Dame Stadium: 80,795

AT A GLANCE

2011: 8-5

COACH: Brian Kelly — At Notre Dame: 16-10, 2 years; overall: 69-32, 10 years

RETURNING STARTERS: 16; 8 offense, 7 defense, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: RB Cierre Wood, RB/WR Theo Riddick, TE Tyler Eifert, C Braxston Cave, DE Stephon Tuitt, LB Manti Te'o, LB Prince Shembo, S Jamoris Slaughter

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Wood and Riddick give the Irish a strong backfield, and Eifert is versatile enough to play tight end, any receiver position and even running back. Te'o is one of the best linebackers in the game and a tackling machine. Tuitt can play at end or the interior, and Slaughter is flexible enough to be effective at safety, cornerback and linebacker.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Notre Dame has to find a quarterback that can cut down on the interceptions — the Irish had 17 passes picked off last season — and it doesn't help that WR Michael Floyd is gone. None of Notre Dame's primary cornerbacks has started a game.

KEY LOSSES: RB Jonas Gray, WR Michael Floyd, DE Aaron Lynch, CB Robert Blanton, CB Gary Gray, S Harrison Smith

OVERVIEW: With an unsettled quarterback position, Notre Dame takes on one of the nation's toughest schedules with games against Michigan, Michigan State, Miami, Stanford, Oklahoma and USC. Kelly says eight-win seasons are not the standard that is set at Notre Dame, but the Irish would do well to match that number this season.

More of the Same in South Bend as QB Questions Abound

Brian Kelly's third season at Notre Dame starts nearly identically to his second season.

The Irish head coach is looking for a quarterback again, while also trying to figure out how to stop turnovers that cost his team dearly last season.

Last year's quarterback competition between Dayne Crist — who transferred to Kansas to play for Charlie Weis, who recruited him to Notre Dame — Tommy Rees, Andrew Hendrix and Everett Golson resulted in an 8-5 season and a loss to Florida State in the Champs Sports Bowl.

This season, Rees, Hendrix, Golson and highly-recruited freshman Gunner Kiel are battling for playing time. The message has been the same as last year: Competition will produce a better leader for the offense.

"It's just going to make us better at the end of the day," Hendrix said.

"Whether there's three or four, everyone's working against each other, and at the same time, everyone is working with each other. As long as there's competition, the winner is going to be better off in the end."

Rees, a junior, is the most experienced of the four options, but he also has been turnover-prone and was facing misdemeanor charges in May for an incident at an off-campus party.

The junior is 11-5 as a starter and has thrown for 3,973 yards with 32 touchdowns in 22 games. He has been intercepted 22 times, including 14 last season.

Hendrix has the arm strength and running ability to lead Kelly's spread offense, but he lacks experience and also struggles to protect the ball. The junior played in five games last season, throwing for 249 yards and running for 162.

Notre Dame's next two options are just as unproven as Hendrix, but they also have the most potential for growth.

Golson, who didn't play last season, displayed his dual-threat ability in the Blue-Gold spring game, throwing for 120 yards — with two touchdowns — and running for 25 yards.

Kiel, who finally landed at Notre Dame after committing to Indiana and then LSU during a wild recruitment, doesn't appear ready to take over a college offense, yet.

"We saw some errors that, unfortunately, are all too familiar," Kelly said of his quarterbacks at the end of spring practice.

"I think there were some strides made, but clearly we're not there yet. We've got a lot of work to do with all the quarterbacks to get them to the level that we want. And we have a high bar set for them."

OFFENSE

While Notre Dame searches for a starting quarterback, it also needs to replace the school's all-time leader in receptions, Michael Floyd.

To ease the transition, Theo Riddick will re-assume the running back role he was recruited to play at Notre Dame, while also retaining some duties at receiver, where he made nine starts in 2011. He will join senior classmate Cierre Wood in the backfield to form the backbone of the offense.

"We can use the term Coach Kelly uses: a hybrid," Riddick said of being a running back this season. "I'll be playing both (positions), and I'm trying to do well at both."

The 5-11, 199-pound Riddick ran for 160 yards on 29 carries as a freshman before shifting to slot receiver, where he caught 78 passes for 850 yards and six touchdowns in the past two seasons.

Cierre Wood
Photo by Joe Robbins

Wood became the first Irish running back in five seasons to rush for more than 1,000 yards last year, finishing with 1,102. He has rushed for 1,705 yards and 12 touchdowns on 336 carries in the past two seasons.

George Atkinson III, who returned two kickoffs for touchdowns last season, also appears ready to help the running game after amassing 124 rushing yards in the spring game.

"I think we all know about Cierre and Theo," Kelly said. "Both of those guys, and George, proved to be three guys that can help us win football games."

Wood and Riddick will run behind an aggressive line that has received a boost from new line coach Harry Hiestand, who took over after Ed Warinner left for Ohio State.

"The whole group loves (Hiestand)," said center Braxston Cave. "He's a motivator and never has anything negative to say. He focuses on pushing you to your peak. He's just a true O-line guy."

As for replacing Floyd, Kelly will find new ways to use tight end Tyler Eifert, who had 63 catches for 803 yards and five touchdowns last season. The 6-6, 251-pound senior can also lineup at a receiver.

Notre Dame will also need receivers TJ Jones, Robby Toma, John Goodman, DaVaris Daniels and Daniel Smith to become viable threats in the passing game.

"We have a lot of playmakers and a lot of talent in different positions," Eifert said. "We just have to put it all together."

DEFENSE

Notre Dame's defense was dented when defensive end Aaron Lynch left the team late in spring practice and then transferred to South Florida after the spring semester.

But the Irish expect to have plenty of firepower on the line to replace the freshman All-American, who led the team with 5.5 sacks and 14 quarterback hurries.

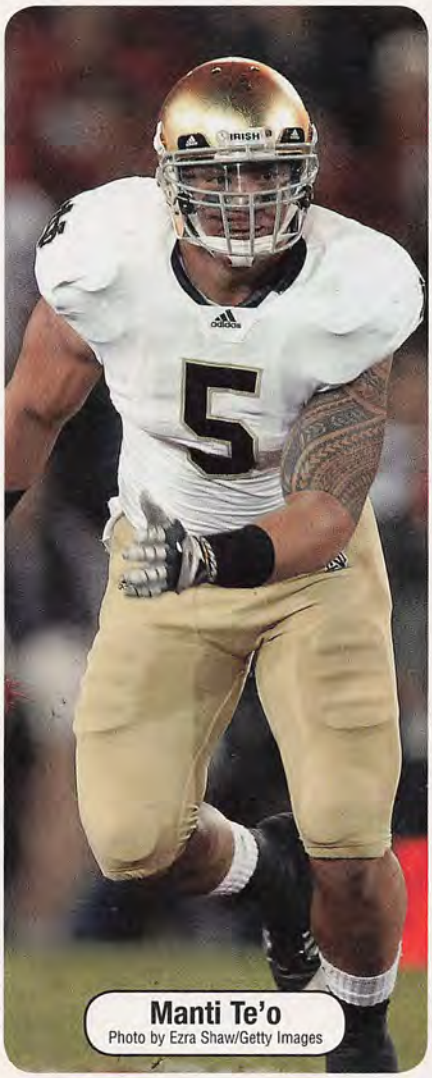
Sophomore defensive end Stephon Tuitt had 30 tackles, including three for loss, last season. Senior Kapron Lewis-Moore has 140 tackles, including 13.5 for loss, in his career.

Louis Nix III, who had 45 tackles and 4.5 tackles for loss last season, and Kona Schwenke pair up for a strong rotation at nose guard.

And the line's depth is boosted by sophomores Chase Hounshell and Tony Springmann, along with freshman Sheldon Day, who enrolled early to take part in spring practice.

"We feel blessed that we're able to feel really good about our defensive line, even losing a really good player like Aaron Lynch," Kelly said.

Notre Dame is also able to feel good



Manti Te'o
Photo by Ezra Shaw/Getty Images

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tommy Rees*	Jr.	11-5 as a starter; must reduce INTs (14 last year).	Andrew Hendrix, Jr.
RB	Cierre Wood*	Sr.	First Irish back to go over 1,000 yards in five seasons.	Theo Riddick, Sr.*
WR	John Goodman	Sr.	Fifth-year senior gets last chance to produce.	DaVaris Daniels, So.
WR	TJ Jones*	Jr.	His three TDs tops list for returning receivers.	Andre Smith, So.
WR	Robby Toma	Sr.	Averaged 10.9 yards per catch last season.	Daniel Smith, Jr.
TE	Tyler Eifert*	Sr.	Versatility allows him to also play receiver.	Ben Koyack, So.
LT	Zack Martin*	Sr.	Has started every game in the last two years.	Jordan Prestwood, So.
LG	Chris Watt*	Sr.	Started every game last year.	Bruce Heggie, Jr.
C	Braxston Cave*	Sr.	Standout player is returning from foot surgery.	Mike Golic Jr., Sr.
RG	Nick Martin	So.	Younger brother of LT Zack Martin.	Conor Hanratty, So.
RT	Christian Lombard	Jr.	Two years of seasoning has him ready to start.	Tate Nichols, Jr.
K	Nick Tausch	Sr.	Hit 14 consecutive FGs as a freshman.	Kyle Brindza, So.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Kapron Lewis-Moore*	Sr.	Injury cost him last five games last year.	Sheldon Day, Fr.
NG	Louis Nix III*	Jr.	Started 11 games last season.	Kona Schwenke, Jr.
DE	Stephon Tuitt	So.	Can also play tackle; had 30 tackles last year.	Chase Hounshell, So.
LB	Prince Shembo*	Jr.	Takes on more duties with move from 'dog' to 'cat.'	Ishaq Williams, So.
LB	Danny Spond	Jr.	Emerged as top 'dog' with Shembo's switch to 'cat.'	Ben Councell, So.
LB	Manti Te'o*	Sr.	Led Irish with 128 tackles last year.	Jarrett Grace, So.
LB	Dan Fox*	Sr.	Had 48 tackles last year.	Carlo Calabrese, Sr.
CB	Bennett Jackson	Jr.	Converted receiver ready to start in secondary.	Jalen Brown, So.
CB	Lo Wood	Jr.	Most experienced cornerback with 21 appearances.	Josh Atkinson, So.
SS	Zeke Motta*	Sr.	Has 102 tackles in career.	Chris Salvi, Sr.
FS	Jamoris Slaughter*	Sr.	Can also shift to cornerback or linebacker.	Austin Collinsworth, Jr.
P	Ben Turk*	Sr.	Averaged 40.3 yards per punt last year.	Kyle Brindza, So.

*Returning Starter

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3 NEWCOMERS OF IMPACT

Gunner Kiel
It took Notre Dame three tries, but they eventually were able to sign the nation's top pro-style quarterback. The 6-4, 210-pound Kiel is a precise passer, but he also rushed for 482 yards and 11 touchdowns as a high school senior and should be able to handle all elements of Brian Kelly's spread offense.

KeiVarae Russell
The 6-0, 170-pound athlete from the state of Washington could play running back or slot receiver in college, and will likely help out in the return game as well. Russell is the prototypical spread offense player, and his playmaking ability will give the Irish several options in using him.

Elijah Shumate
Shumate was one of the surprise standout performers at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in January because he was constantly around the football making plays. He has the size of a college safety, but plays with the mentality of a linebacker and will be an asset to Notre Dame's run defense.

THE SLEEPER

Nicky Baratti
Considering he was offered by more than 20 schools during the course of his recruitment, it is questionable whether Baratti can be called a sleeper, but there is no doubt the 6-2, 215-pound athlete does not come to South Bend with as much fanfare as many as his classmates.

Committments	16
Average Stars	3.5
★★★★★	1
★★★★☆	7
★★★☆☆	7
★★☆☆☆	1
Total Stars	56

National Rank: 20

2013 NEEDS: Cornerbacks Robert Blanton and Gary Gray have concluded their careers at Notre Dame, and the Irish thought they had their replacements in the fold with commitments from four-star prospects Tee Shepard and Ronald Darby in the 2012 class. Darby, however, de-committed from the Irish a month before National Signing Day and Shepard left the team just a few weeks after enrolling early. That position now becomes priority No. 1 in 2013 for head coach Brian Kelly and his staff.

By Josh Helmholdt/Rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Nicky Baratti	ATH	6-2	215	★★★	Spring, TX	Klein Oak

Rated as the No. 57 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 29 athlete...Rushed for 1,267 yards and 17 touchdowns and passed for 1,873 yards and 13 scores as a junior.

Chris Brown	WR	6-2	185	★★★	Hanahan, SC	Hanahan

Rated as the No. 11 prospect in South Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 81 wide receiver...Caught 33 passes for 532 yards and 12 touchdowns as a senior...Had 52 catches for 1,098 yards and 16 TDs as a junior.

Scott Daly	LS	6-4	230	★★	Downers Grove, IL	Downers Grove South

Committed to Notre Dame in April of his junior year...Chose the Fighting Irish over Northwestern.

Sheldon Day	DT	6-2	286	★★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Warren Central

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Indiana...Rated as the nation's No. 18 defensive tackle...Had 67 tackles, 11 tackles for loss and nine sacks as a senior.

Justin Ferguson	WR	6-1	210	★★★	Pembroke Pines, FL	Flanagan

Rated as the No. 57 prospect in Florida by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 58 wide receiver...Chose Notre Dame over Alabama, Florida, FIU, Florida State, Miami, UCF and Wisconsin.

Mark Harrell	OL	6-5	270	★★★	Charlotte, NC	Charlotte Catholic

Rated as the No. 17 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 25 offensive guard...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.

Jarron Jones	DT	6-7	308	★★★★	Rochester, NY	Aquinas Institute

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 2 prospect in New York...Rated as the nation's No. 14 defensive tackle...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Had 71 tackles and five sacks as a senior.

Gunner Kiel	QB	6-4	210	★★★★★	Columbus, IN	East

Rivals100 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Indiana...Rated as the nation's No. 1 pro-style quarterback...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl...Committed to Indiana and LSU before enrolling at Notre Dame.

William Mahone	RB	5-11	205	★★★★	Austintown, OH	Austintown Fitch

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 13 prospect in Ohio...Rated as the nation's No. 18 running back...Chose Notre Dame over Pittsburgh.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Davonte' Neal	WR	5-10	175	★★★★	Scottsdale, AZ	Chaparral

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Arizona...Rated as the nation's No. 17 wide receiver...Participated in the Under Armour All-American Game...Rushed for 1,317 yards and 16 touchdowns and caught 62 passes for 1,113 yards and 14 TDs as a senior...Late addition to the Notre Dame class.

Romeo Okwara	DE	6-5	240	★★★	Charlotte, NC	Ardrey Kell

Rated as the No. 19 prospect in North Carolina by Rivals.com...Rated as the nation's No. 35 weakside defensive end...Participated in the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.

CJ Prosise	DB	6-1	202	★★★	Woodberry Forest, VA	Woodberry Forest School

Rated as the No. 22 prospect in Virginia by Rivals.com...Chose Notre Dame over Boston College, Cincinnati, Duke, Maryland, North Carolina, Penn State, Vanderbilt, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Wake Forest and Wisconsin.

KeiVarae Russell	ATH	6-0	170	★★★★	Everett, WA	Mariner

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 3 prospect in Washington...Rated as the nation's No. 9 athlete...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Elijah Shumate	DB	6-1	205	★★★★	East Orange, NJ	Don Bosco Prep

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 4 prospect in New Jersey...Rated as the nation's No. 8 safety...Participated in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Ronnie Stanley	OL	6-7	285	★★★★	Las Vegas, NV	Bishop Gorman

Rivals250 selection...Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Nevada...Rated as the nation's No. 15 offensive tackle.

John Turner	DB	6-2	205	★★★	Indianapolis, IN	Cathedral

Rated as the No. 1 prospect in Indiana by Rivals.com...Chose Notre Dame over Akron, Ball State, Bowling Green, Indiana, Miami (Ohio), Minnesota, Temple, Toledo and Western Michigan.

FIGHTING IRISH SPRING ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
4	George Atkinson, III	RB	6-1	210	So.	Stockton, CA
43	Josh Atkinson	CB	5-11	185	So.	Stockton, CA
49	Blake Breslau	S	5-10	185	Sr.	San Diego, CA
27	Kyle Brindza	K/P	6-1	225	So.	Canton, MI
21	Jalen Brown	CB	6-1	199	So.	Irving, TX
44	Carlo Calabrese	ILB	6-1	245	Sr.	Verona, NJ
3	Amir Carlisle	RB	5-10	185	So.	Santa Clara, CA
67	Kevin Carr	DE	6-7	325	Jr.	Nashville, TN
56	Brad Carrico	OT	6-5	290	So.	Dublin, OH
40	Connor Cavalaris	S	5-10	194	So.	Lake Forest, IL
52	Braxston Cave	C	6-3	304	Sr.	Mishawaka
28	Austin Collinsworth	S	6-1	202	Jr.	Fort Thomas, KY
30	Ben Councell	OLB	6-5	240	So.	Asheville, NC
60	Jordan Cowart	LS	6-2	230	Sr.	Plantation, FL
16	DaVaris Daniels	WR	6-2	190	So.	Vernon Hills, IL
91	Sheldon Day	DL	6-2	286	Fr.	Indianapolis
80	Tyler Eifert	TE	6-6	251	Sr.	Fort Wayne
41	Matthias Farley	S	5-11	200	So.	Charlotte, NC
17	Charlie Fiessinger	QB	6-1	185	So.	Mason, OH
38	Nick Fitzpatrick	WR	5-8	170	Sr.	Mishawaka
48	Dan Fox	ILB	6-3	240	Sr.	Rocky River, OH
88	Jake Golic	TE	6-4	245	Sr.	West Hartford, CT
57	Mike Golic, Jr.	C/G	6-3	295	Sr.	West Hartford, CT
5	Everett Golson	QB	6-0	185	So.	Myrtle Beach, SC
81	John Goodman	WR	6-3	207	Sr.	Fort Wayne
59	Jarrett Grace	ILB	6-3	240	So.	Cincinnati, OH
65	Conor Hanratty	C/G	6-5	305	So.	New Canaan, CT
4	Eilar Hardy	S	5-11	185	So.	Reynoldsburg, OH
77	Matt Hegarty	C	6-5	291	So.	Aztec, NM
51	Bruce Heggie	C	6-5	285	Jr.	Sorrento, FL
12	Andrew Hendrix	QB	6-2	220	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
50	Chase Hounshell	DE	6-4	265	So.	Kirtland, OH
2	Bennett Jackson	CB	6-0	185	Jr.	Hazlet, NJ
7	TJ Jones	WR	5-11	190	Jr.	Gainesville, GA
1	Gunner Kiel	QB	6-4	210	Fr.	Columbus
18	Ben Koyack	TE	6-5	253	So.	Oil City, PA
37	Eric Lee	WR	5-9	180	So.	West Des Moines, IA
89	Kapron Lewis-Moore	DE	6-4	306	Sr.	Weatherford, TX
39	Ryan Liebscher	WR	5-11	205	Jr.	Colorado Springs, CO
93	Connor Little	OLB	6-3	225	So.	Lake Elmo, MN
74	Christian Lombard	G/T	6-5	309	Jr.	Inverness, IL
71	Dennis Mahoney	OT	6-7	294	Sr.	Baltimore, MD
72	Nick Martin	G/T	6-4	285	So.	Indianapolis
70	Zack Martin	OT	6-4	304	Sr.	Indianapolis
86	Arturo Martinez	DE	6-4	250	Jr.	Miami, FL
14	Luke Massa	WR	6-4	225	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
15	Dan McCarthy	S	6-2	205	Sr.	Youngstown, OH
33	Cam McDaniel	CB	5-10	195	So.	Coppell,TX
8	Kendall Moore	ILB	6-1	242	Jr.	Raleigh, NC
17	Zeke Motta	S	6-2	215	Sr.	Vero Beach, FL
64	Tate Nichols	OT	6-8	320	Jr.	Walton, KY
85	Troy Niklas	TE	6-7	252	So.	Fullerton, CA
9	Louis Nix, III	NG	6-3	326	Jr.	Jacksonville, FL
63	Grant Patton	DE	6-6	256	Sr.	Louisville, KY
49	Tyler Plantz	RB	5-9	202	Jr.	Frankfort, IL
79	Jordan Prestwood	OT	6-5	284	So.	Plant City, FL
56	Anthony Rabasa	ILB	6-3	240	So.	Miami, FL
11	Tommy Rees	QB	6-2	210	Jr.	Lake Forest, IL
6	Theo Riddick	RB	5-11	199	Sr.	Manville, NJ
31	Cameron Roberson	RB	6-0	218	Jr.	Newbury Park, CA
35	Joe Romano	CB	5-9	170	Jr.	River Forest, IL
94	Dominic Romeo	DE	6-6	245	Jr.	Turlock, CA
24	Chris Salvi	S	5-10	190	Sr.	Lake Forest, IL
36	Will Salvi	CB	5-10	176	Sr.	Lake Forest, IL
38	Joe Schmidt	ILB	6-0	223	So.	Orange, CA
96	Kona Schwenke	DE	6-4	286	Jr.	Hauula, HI
55	Prince Shembo	OLB	6-2	250	Jr.	Charlotte, NC
26	Jamoris Slaughter	S	6-0	200	Sr.	Stone Mountain, GA
84	Andre Smith	WR	6-2	190	So.	Davie, FL
87	Daniel Smith	WR	6-4	215	Jr.	South Bend
13	Danny Spond	OLB	6-2	248	Jr.	Littleton, CO
69	Tony Springmann	NG	6-6	290	So.	Fort Wayne
92	Tyler Stockton	NG	6-0	285	Sr.	Linwood, NJ
62	Matt Tansey	OL	6-6	265	Sr.	Berkeley Heights, NJ
40	Nick Tausch	K	6-0	201	Sr.	Plano, TX
5	Manti Te'o	ILB	6-2	255	Sr.	Laie, HI
9	Robby Toma	WR	5-9	185	Sr.	Laie, HI
7	Stephon Tuitt	DE	6-6	295	So.	Monroe, GA
35	Ben Turk	P	5-11	186	Sr.	Davie, FL
53	Justin Utupo	ILB	6-1	258	Jr.	Lakewood, CA
66	Chris Watt	OG	6-3	310	Sr.	Glen Ellyn, IL
82	Alex Welch	TE	6-4	250	Jr.	Cincinnati, OH
11	Ishaq Williams	OLB	6-5	255	So.	Brooklyn, NY
20	Cierre Wood	RB	6-0	215	Sr.	Oxnard, CA
23	Lo Wood	CB	5-10	195	Jr.	Apopka, FL

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	GP	Effic	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD	Lng	Avg/G
T. Rees	13	133.4	269	411	14	65.5	2871	20	56	220.8
A. Hendrix	5	103.3	18	37	2	48.6	249	1	45	49.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
M. Floyd	13	100	1147	11.5	9	56	88.2
T. Eifert	13	63	803	12.7	5	38	61.8
T. Riddick	11	38	436	11.5	3	45	39.6

RUSHING

	GP	Att	Gain	Loss	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Avg/G
C. Wood	13	217	1186	84	1102	5.1	9	55	84.8
J. Gray	11	114	812	21	791	6.9	12	79	71.9
A. Hendrix	5	25	195	33	162	6.5	1	78	32.4

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M. Te'o 128, H. Smith 90, R. Blanton 70
Tackles for loss: M. Te'o 13.5, R. Blanton 8, two tied with 7
Sacks: A. Lynch 5.5, M. Te'o 5, D. Fleming 3.5
Interceptions: R. Blanton 2, G. Gray 2, four tied with 1

NOTEBOOK

Coach **Brian Kelly** had to reshape his coaching staff going into his third season with the Irish.

Charley Molnar, the Irish's offensive coordinator the last two seasons, took over as head coach at the University of Massachusetts. Two coaches — Ed Warinner, the offensive line coach and running game coordinator, and running backs coach Tim Hinton — left to join new Ohio State coach Urban Meyer.

Kelly brought in one new voice to the offense, hiring former Tennessee offensive line coach **Harry Hiestand** to coach the offensive line and serve as running game coordinator.

But he stayed in house and reassigned coaches for the rest of the offense.

Chuck Martin moved from safeties coach to offensive coordinator. **Tony Alford** shifted to running backs after serving as the receivers coach the last two seasons, but he will still work with slot receivers. **Mike Denbrock** moved from tight ends coach to outside receivers coach and was named the passing game coordinator. **Scott Booker**, an offensive intern the past two seasons, was named tight ends coach, and he will coordinate the special teams.

Bob Diaco remains the defensive coordinator and will work with the linebackers, but he added the title assistant head coach. Cornerbacks coach **Kerry Cooks** was promoted to co-defensive coordinator. **Mike Elston** continues to coach the defensive line. And **Bob Elliott** was brought in from Iowa State to take over as safeties coach.

• **Lo Wood** is Notre Dame's most experienced cornerback, but that does not guarantee him a starting spot. Wood has been pushed by **Josh Atkinson**.

"Josh has great speed. Lo is a pretty technique-oriented player," Kelly said. "If you could get Lo's technique on Josh and put some speed on Lo, you would have the right guy there."

• The move of 6-7, 252-pound **Troy Niklas** from linebacker to tight end was a message to all tight ends behind starter **Tyler Eifert**. If Niklas, **Alex Welch**, **Ben Koyack** and **Jake Golic** want to play, they are going to have to block.

"You better in-line block, and you better control the edge of this defense," Kelly said. "That's the guy who will be the next man in."

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

On Manti Te'o: "The biggest thing with Te'o is he physically has the size you're looking for. He's instinctive and forceful as a tackler, and he has done a much better job as he has matured of wrapping his arms and not relying on his explosiveness to just knock a player to the ground. One of the negatives is that in today's NFL, where they pass so much, he might not be viewed as a true three-down linebacker in every scheme. One of the knocks on him is his pure athleticism."

On Tyler Eifert: "Physically, he looks the part — a big, tall, good-looking athlete. At the same time, you have some concerns about him as a blocker in terms of strength and want-to. But in today's NFL, which is looking for the receiving specialist tight end, you need size, speed and reliable hands ... and Eifert brings all three of those."

— Rob Rang, Senior draft analyst, NFLDraftScout.com

Louis Nix
Photo by Scott Boehm

about its defense, thanks to the return of linebacker Manti Te'o.

The senior flirted with jumping to the NFL after leading the team with 128 tackles and 13.5 tackles for loss last season.

Te'o said he wanted defensive coordinator Bob Diaco to treat him like the worst player on the team, so that the linebacker would be pushed to get even better in his final season.

"He has been great," Te'o said of Diaco. "He has corrected me on all my little mistakes, just being technical, so my game can be as perfect as it can be."

Dan Fox and Carlo Calabrese, who combined for 85 tackles last season, will continue to share the middle linebacker spot next to Te'o.

Prince Shembo, who had 31 tackles last year, and Ishaq Williams will team up to replace the void at one outside spot vacated by the graduated Darius Fleming.

Danny Spond, who had 13 tackles as Shembo's backup last year, will take over the other outside linebacker spot. Ben Councell will be his backup.

Half of Notre Dame's defensive backfield is proven with the return of safeties Jamoris Slaughter and Zeke Motta. The seniors combined for 85 tackles and two interceptions last season.

Junior Austin Collinsworth adds depth at safety and allows the Irish to move around Slaughter, who can also play cornerback and linebacker.

The safeties will be counted on to help cornerbacks Lo Wood, Bennett Jackson and Josh Atkinson settle into more prominent roles in the defense. None of the three has started a game. Wood is the most experienced cornerback, having played in 21 games.

"I think by the time the season starts, they will be a whole lot more comfortable and have confidence," Slaughter said of the corners.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Kickers Nick Tausch and Kyle Brindza will try to replace the graduated David Ruffer.

Tausch shared field-goal duties with Ruffer two years ago, converting 14 consecutive field-goal attempts at one point as a freshman. Tausch is 15 of 18 on field goals in his career.

Brindza handled kickoffs as a freshman last season, averaging 65.3 yards.

BEST & BRIGHTEST

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

RB Cierre Wood

Set career highs in rushing yards (1,102), carries (217) and rushing touchdowns (nine) last season. ... Became the 11th Notre Dame running back to go over 1,000 rushing yards last year. ... Improved on catching passes out of backfield last year with 27 receptions for 189 yards. ... His 1,291 yards from scrimmage last season were ninth most in school history. ... Has run for 1,705 yards in two seasons, averaging 5.1 yards per carry. He has 12 touchdowns for career.

EMERGING STAR

RB George Atkinson III

Displayed potential to be a threat in the spring game, rushing for 124 yards on 15 carries. ... Must cut down on fumbles; he lost two in spring game. ... Tied school record for touchdowns on kickoff returns with two last season. ... His 915 kickoff return yards were most in Notre Dame history. ... His 26.1 yards per kickoff return ranked 19th nationally. ... Son of former All-Pro Oakland Raider defensive back George Atkinson Jr. and twin brother of Irish cornerback Josh Atkinson.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Davonte' Neal

Named Gatorade Arizona Player of the Year after junior and senior seasons. ... Ranked No. 8 on ESPNU 150 list. ... Scored 30 touchdowns on offense (16 receiving, 14 rushing) and added five touchdowns on kickoff and punt returns as senior. ... Ran for 1,317 yards and had 1,113 receiving yards as senior. ... Played receiver in Under Armour All-America Game after being selected for the event as a defensive back. ... Waited nearly three weeks after Signing Day before deciding to sign with Notre Dame.

2009 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	30.1	32
Rushing	128.3	84
Passing	323.5	5
Total	451.8	8
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	25.9	63
Rushing	170.3	89
Passing	227.5	76
Total	397.8	86
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 5	+ 0.29	29

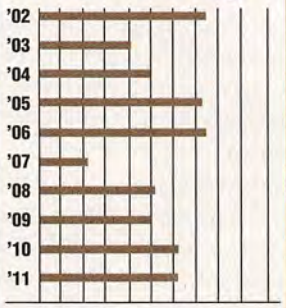
2010 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	26.3	67
Rushing	126.6	92
Passing	253.1	34
Total	379.7	61
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.2	23
Rushing	142.2	50
Passing	215.1	54
Total	357.2	50
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+ 1	+ 0.08	51

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring	29.2	49
Rushing	160.4	54
Passing	252.6	40
Total	413.0	35
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring	20.7	24
Rushing	138.9	47
Passing	205.8	40
Total	344.7	30
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
-15	-1.15	118

10-YEAR WINNING TREND

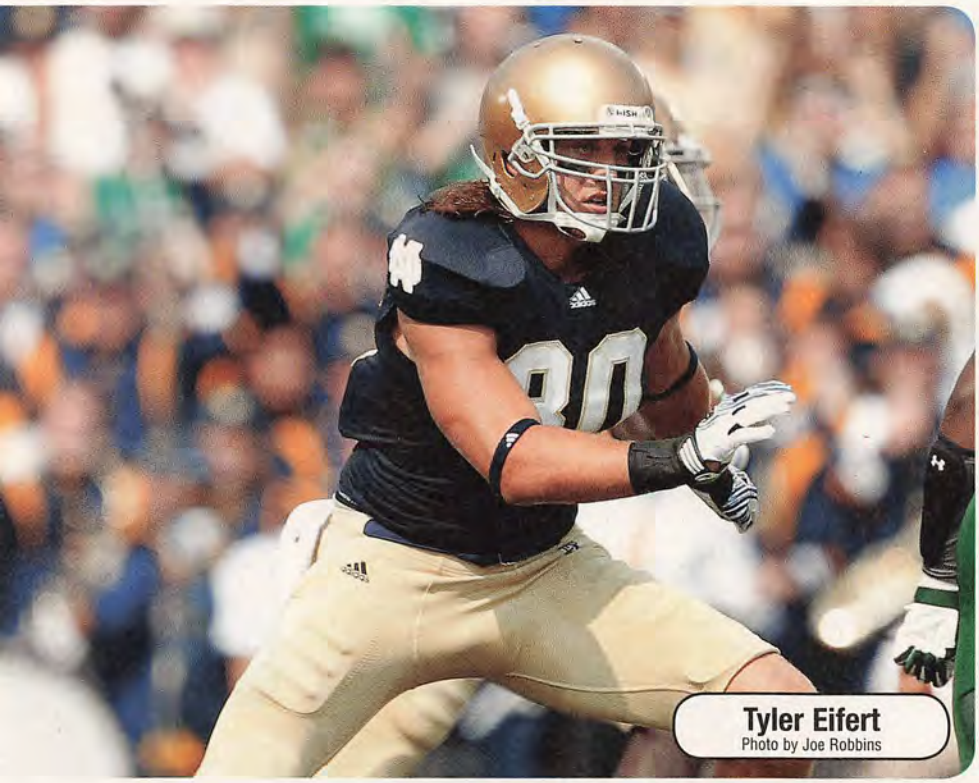


RESULTS

8-5

L	SOUTH FLORIDA	20-23
L	at Michigan	31-35
W	MICHIGAN STATE	31-13
W	at Pittsburgh	15-12
W	at Purdue	38-10
W	AIR FORCE	59-33
L	USC	17-31
W	NAVY	56-14
W	at Wake Forest	24-17
W	MARYLAND	45-21
W	BOSTON COLLEGE	16-14
L	at Stanford	14-28
	Champs Sports Bowl	
L	vs. Florida State	14-18

PLAYER PROFILE



Tyler Eifert
Photo by Joe Robbins

More on Tap For Eifert this Season

Notre Dame tight end Tyler Eifert will have plenty on his plate in his senior season.

The 6-6, 251-pounder will be counted on to replace the production of the most prolific receiver in Notre Dame history — Michael Floyd. He graduated as the Irish's leader in receptions (271), receiving yards (3,686), receiving yards per game (85.7), 100-yard receiving games (17) and touchdown receptions (37).

Coach Brian Kelly plans to move Eifert around the offense to give the tight end plenty of opportunities to increase the 63 catches for 803 yards and five touchdowns he had last season.

"He's a guy that has to replace the production loss of Michael Floyd," Kelly said of Eifert. "To do that, we have to be able to get him into some favorable positions. Obviously, he's not going to lock down just at the tight end position.

"He's a guy that can play at wide receiver; heck, he could play running back if we need him to. He's an incredible athlete and a versatile player, so we'll take advantage of that skill."

Eifert had a taste of moving around the formations as a sophomore when he took over as the starting tight end when the Irish lost Kyle Rudolph to a shoulder injury in 2010. Eifert started the last six games and was constantly put in motion, even playing H-back.

Eifert considered leaving early for the NFL Draft, but the promise of an increased role and numerous new duties in the offense brought him back to Notre Dame.

"It's been everything they said they (would) do, moving me around and stuff like that," Eifert said. "It's nice. I think it will be good for our offense."

Eifert's versatility also allows Notre Dame to take advantage of its talented pool of tight ends and keep defenses guessing.

Junior Alex Welch and sophomore Ben Koyack saw action as backups last season, and the Irish shifted linebacker Troy Niklas to tight end to add another blocker at the position. Senior Jake Golic also returns to the tight end group.

Offensive coordinator Chuck Martin likes the versatility.

"It's one thing if this guy's a blocker and this guy's a catcher," he said.

"But if they can both block and catch, which I think we have the ability to do that, then it causes major issues for the defense, because they don't know what personnel we're in."

He set a Michigan high school record with 19 field goals as a senior.

Ben Turk returns to handle the punting duties after averaging 40.3 yards last season.

George Atkinson III gave Notre Dame's kick return unit a boost last season when he stepped in to set a school record with 915 return yards, bringing two back for touchdowns.

Notre Dame will likely look to freshman receiver Davonte' Neal to spark a punt return game that averaged 3.7 yards last season. Neal averaged 26.6 yards on punt returns and scored two touchdowns as a senior in high school.

SCHEDULE ANALYSIS

Notre Dame opens one of the most difficult schedules in college football in a unique way. The Irish travel to Dublin, Ireland, to take on Navy in the Sept. 1 opener.

After a home game against Purdue on Sept. 8, Notre Dame starts a challenging three-game stretch of night games, traveling to Michigan State, playing host to Michigan and finishing against Miami in Chicago's Soldier Field on Oct. 6.

After home games against Stanford and BYU, the Irish face one of their toughest foes — Oklahoma, in Norman, Okla., on Oct. 27.

After that, Notre Dame might be able to gain momentum before its trip to Los Angeles to close the regular season against rival USC.

— Tony Krausz

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	vs. Navy (Dublin, Ireland)	5-7
Sept. 8	PURDUE	7-6
Sept. 15	at Michigan State	11-3
Sept. 22	MICHIGAN	11-2
Oct. 6	vs. Miami (Chicago)	6-6
Oct. 13	STANFORD	11-2
Oct. 20	BYU	10-3
Oct. 27	at Oklahoma	10-3
Nov. 3	PITTSBURGH	6-7
Nov. 10	at Boston College	4-8
Nov. 17	WAKE FOREST	6-7
Nov. 24	at USC	10-2

TOLEDO | ROCKETS

MAC rank: 5 Record:9-4 MAC record: 7-1 (T-1st, West) Stadium: Glass Bowl (26,248)

By Matt Markey

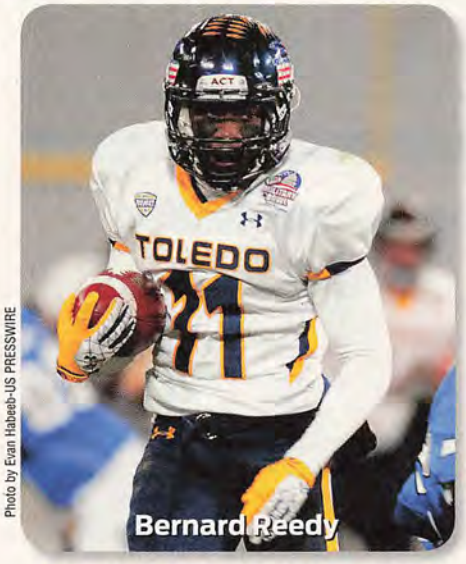


Photo by Evan Habeeb-US PRESSWIRE

"When you have two very experienced and capable guys at quarterback, it just increases your ability as an offense to make a lot of good things happen." — Coach Matt Campbell

ROCKETS at a GLANCE

COACH: Matt Campbell — At Toledo and overall: 1st year
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Louis Ayeni, Jason Candle
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tom Matukewicz

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 2004
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2009
RETURNING STARTERS: 10; 4 offense, 4 defense, kicker, punter

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Austin Dantin, QB Terrance Owens, RB David Fluellen, WR Bernard Reedy, WR Dwight Macon, LB Dan Molls, DL T.J. Fatinikun, S Jermaine Robinson

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: The Rockets have the benefit of momentum and the comfort of continuity; Campbell, who was the team's popular offensive coordinator, almost immediately moved into the head coach role after Tim Beckman left for Illinois. Toledo has multiple playmakers on offense and on all three levels of defense.
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS: Toledo cannot afford an injury at running back and receiver, where depth is thin. The Rockets gave up more than 400 yards per game and nearly 32 points an outing in 2011, and can't continue putting their offense in a position where it has to score on nearly every possession.

OFFENSE

The Rockets will stick with the two-headed quarterback approach that has worked well in the past, using senior Austin Dantin and junior Terrance Owens in co-starting roles. They offer different looks and bring varied talents to the offense.

David Fluellen appears ready to assume the workhorse post at tailback after solid backup duty in the past couple of seasons.

Instead of wasting backup quarterback Dwight Macon's talents on the sidelines, the Rockets moved him to wide receiver in the spring, and Macon wowed everyone. He will join proven playmaker Bernard Reedy to give Toledo plenty of pop on the outside.

The real key is the line, which is where new head coach Matt Campbell focused his work in the past three years as coordinator and position coach.

The group is undergoing some reshaping around center Zac Kerin and guard Greg Mancz. Experience gained by Jeff Myers, A.J. Lindeman and Josh Hendershot as backups should allow them to move in and keep the group humming.

DEFENSE

The combination of injuries and fluctuations in performance over the past couple of seasons allowed the Rockets to give numerous players valuable experience. The benefits will be enjoyed this season as Toledo replaces six starters with capable and battle-hardened players.

The unit up front is deep and nasty, led by pass rushing phenom T.J. Fatinikun at end when he completes his recovery from an elbow injury that cut short his 2011 season. He will be joined by Danny Farr, Elijah Jones, Ben Pike, Jayrone Elliott and Christian Smith to make things tough for the opposition.

The linebackers are another solid unit, with tackling machine Dan Molls leading the gifted group that includes Robert Bell, Vladimir Emilien and Ray Bush.

The secondary is becoming more settled. Campbell is comfortable with senior safety Jermaine Robinson, who is back for a fourth year as a starter, where he will be joined by senior Mark Singer, back after an injury-forced redshirt season.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jeremiah Detmer returns to handle all of the placekicking after proving himself with his distance work last season. Detmer had a strong spring and solidified his hold on the overall placekicking job.

Junior Vince Penza has the inside track on retaining the punting role after his clutch work in the Military Bowl win over Air Force, but junior college transfer Brad Dunavant enrolled early and is pressing Penza for the starting job.

OVERVIEW

Matt Campbell, the youngest FBS head coach in the country at just 32, is not out to prove he can remake the formula for success at Toledo. Campbell inherits a solid group of veterans and a program that Tim Beckman left in great shape when he departed for Illinois. The Rockets have been banging on the door the past two years, going 8-5 and 9-4; they should make another run at the conference championship game this time around.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR Corey Jones: When star receiver and return man Eric Page left early for the NFL, it left Toledo in need of a dynamic playmaker. Jones was that kind of performer in the Pennsylvania high school ranks, scoring 39 touchdowns while displaying a wide array of skills.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	**4**	**Austin Dantin***	**6-2**	**200**	**Sr.**
RB	22	David Fluellen	6-0	215	Jr.
WR	8	James Green	6-3	200	Jr.
WR	**11**	**Bernard Reedy***	**5-9**	**175**	**Jr.**
WR	17	Dwight Macon	6-0	200	So.
TE	13	Cordale Scott	6-4	220	Sr.
LT	56	Josh Hendershot	6-4	275	So.
LG	54	Jeff Myers	6-3	280	So.
C	**67**	**Zac Kerin***	**6-5**	**294**	**Jr.**
RG	**75**	**Greg Mancz***	**6-5**	**280**	**So.**
RT	60	A.J. Lindeman	6-6	300	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	**23**	**T.J. Fatinikun***	**6-2**	**250**	**Sr.**
DT	92	Danny Farr	6-5	295	Sr.
NT	98	Elijah Jones	6-2	295	Jr.
DE	84	Christian Smith	6-2	260	Jr.
LB	**32**	**Dan Molls***	**6-1**	**222**	**Sr.**
LB	**38**	**Robert Bell***	**6-0**	**227**	**Sr.**
LB	25	Vladimir Emilien	6-1	204	Jr.
CB	26	Keith Suggs	5-10	175	So.
CB	6	Byron Best	5-9	200	Sr.
SS	**29**	**Jermaine Robinson***	**6-3**	**188**	**Sr.**
FS	43	Mark Singer	6-1	194	Sr.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	**85**	**Jeremiah Detmer***	**5-8**	**170**	**So.**
P	**35**	**Vince Penza***	**6-1**	**201**	**Jr.**

*Returning starter

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Arizona
Sept. 8	at Wyoming
Sept. 15	BOWLING GREEN
Sept. 22	COASTAL CAROLINA
Sept. 29	at Western Michigan
Oct. 6	CENTRAL MICHIGAN
Oct. 13	at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 20	CINCINNATI
Oct. 27	at Buffalo
Nov. 6	BALL STATE
Nov. 14	at Northern Illinois
Nov. 20	AKRON

2011 RESULTS

W	NEW HAMPSHIRE	58-22
L	at Ohio State	22-27
L	BOISE STATE	15-40
L	at Syracuse (OT)	30-33
W	at Temple	36-13
W	EASTERN MICHIGAN	54-16
W	at Bowling Green	28-21
W	MIAMI (OH)	49-28
L	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	60-63
W	WESTERN MICHIGAN	66-63
W	at Central Michigan	44-17
W	at Ball State	45-28
	Military Bowl	
W	vs. Air Force	42-41

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring Offense	42.2	8
Rushing Offense	213.6	17
Passing Offense	267.7	30
Total Offense	481.3	9
DEFENSE	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
Scoring Defense	31.7	94
Rushing Defense	132.8	41
Pass Defense	268.8	105
Total Defense	401.5	76
TO MARGIN	**PER GAME**	**RANK**
+16	+1.23	3

PITTSBURGH PANTHERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joe Rudolph | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dave Huxtable** | **STADIUM: Heinz Field: 65,05**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
6-7, 4-3 Big East (T-4th)

COACH:
Paul Chryst — At Pitt and overall: 1st year

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 8 offense, 4 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
RB Ray Graham, WR Devin Street, TE Hubie Graham, DT Aaron Donald, LB Dan Mason, SS Ray Vinopal, FS Jarred Holley

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
The Panthers are transitioning from a spread offense to a pro-style offense — and that is a good thing because the team is deep at running back and the line is excellent at run blocking. Defensively, the tackle tandem might be the best in the Big East, and the secondary is extremely deep and versatile.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
The passing game should be improved, but Tino Sunseri must play much better than he did a year ago. The pass blocking is suspect and the receivers are mostly pedestrian, so it could be a struggle. The defensive and offensive lines are both extremely thin, and the linebacker group lacks experience.

KEY LOSSES:
OT Jordan Gibbs, OT Lucas Nix, DE Brandon Lindsey, DT Chas Alecxih, DT Myles Caragein, LB Max Gruder, CB Antwuan Reed

OVERVIEW:
Pitt will be breaking in its third new coach in two years (Michael Haywood lasted less than a month), but the Panthers seem to have found the right fit in Chryst, the former Wisconsin offensive coordinator. Chryst is a no-frills guy who fits perfectly in the Steel City, and the locals appreciate his pro-style philosophy. But the transition may take a year or two as Chryst inherited a roster with an extreme lack of depth along both lines.

The Right Fit? Pitt Seeks Stability Under Chryst

Paul Chryst seems to be exactly what the doctor ordered for a Pitt program that has gone through an unprecedented stretch of instability over the past two seasons.

When Chryst was hired last December, in fact, he was the sixth person in a period of about 13 months, including interims, to hold the title "Pitt head coach." But everything about him suggests he could hold that title for a long time.

Chryst is the exact opposite of the man he replaced, Todd Graham, who jolted the program when he left for Arizona State less than a year after he took the job.

Graham had the feel of a fast-talking, self-absorbed snake oil salesman who relied on catch phrases like "high octane" to describe his style of football. He annoyed nearly everyone who had contact with the program because of his micromanagement and obsessive desire to put his stamp on the program.

That did not play well with the fan base or the people in Western Pennsylvania, but Chryst, who is more understated — and far more meat and potatoes in terms of his football style — has been embraced and viewed by most as a breath of fresh air.

Chryst will return the Panthers from Graham's spread offense to the pro-style football of the Dave Wannstedt era on both sides of the ball, and that's probably a good thing because the overwhelming majority of the roster was recruited to play that way.

Pitt has some major holes to fill and depth is an issue as two whole recruiting classes have been virtually lost in the coaching shuffle. But the Panthers have an extremely win-friendly non-conference schedule (they play two lower-division teams) and the Big East Conference should be weak, so a fifth consecutive trip to a bowl is not out of the question.

OFFENSE

Senior Tino Sunseri has been a lightning rod for criticism, but he is and has been, by far, the Panthers' best option. Last year's struggles had a lot more to do with the system than Sunseri.

In 2010, Sunseri's first season as a starter and Dave Wannstedt's last as the Panthers coach, Sunseri was pretty good; he completed nearly 65 percent (223 of 346) of his passes for 2,572 yards, with 16 touchdowns and nine interceptions. He led the team to an 8-5 record and a bowl win.

Sunseri, like most of the players on offense, talked at length during the spring about how much more comfortable he was in the pro-style offense. He clearly settled in and got better as the spring progressed.

The line needs to be rebuilt some, but that process was aided greatly when senior left guard Chris Jacobson, who missed most of last season with a knee injury, was granted a sixth year of eligibility. Jacobson and senior center Ryan Turnley will anchor the line, but the other guard spot will not be settled until training camp and both tackles will be first-year starters.

Chryst's run-blocking schemes are especially good, and that's great news because Pitt's strength is at running back, where senior Ray Graham should push for major awards. He is backed up by talented sophomore Isaac Bennett, and the Panthers also will have highly touted incoming freshman Rushel Shell.

The receivers and tight ends aren't necessarily going to scare anyone, but senior tight end Hubie Graham is an excellent fit in the pro-style offense and the receivers as a whole are versatile. The best of the bunch is junior Devin Street, who matured into a go-to kind of player late last season and should be

Sunseri's top target.

Two other experienced receivers return — shifty slot receiver Cam Saddler and Mike Shanahan, who is 6-5 and has a great set of hands — and there are a slew of younger guys all looking to make their marks.

DEFENSE

The defensive line took major graduation hits with the loss of starters Myles Caragein, Chas Alecxih and Brandon Lindsey. That is especially bad timing, given that the Panthers are shifting from a three-man front to a four-man front.

Still, the tackle position is in great shape as junior Aaron Donald should push for first-team all-conference honors. He could be flanked by either sophomore Khaynin Mosley-Smith or Tyrone Ezell; both are explosive players despite their size.

The end position is a little thin and not very experienced, but sophomores Bryan Murphy and T.J. Clemmings showed some flashes during the spring, and senior Shayne Hale might finally be ready to make an impact.

The linebackers got a nice boost when junior Dan Mason, who suffered a major knee injury early in 2010 and was thought to be done for his career, was medically cleared after nearly two years of rehab. Mason, who will man the middle, looked like he hadn't missed a step in the spring.

While the outside linebackers are inexperienced, they are athletic and able to make plays in space. Talented sophomore Todd Thomas is excellent in coverage, as well.

The deepest unit on the team is at safety where the Panthers have four players — seniors Jarred Holley and Andrew Taglianetti, junior Jason Hendricks and sophomore Michigan transfer Ray Vinopal — capable of being starters at a lot of programs.

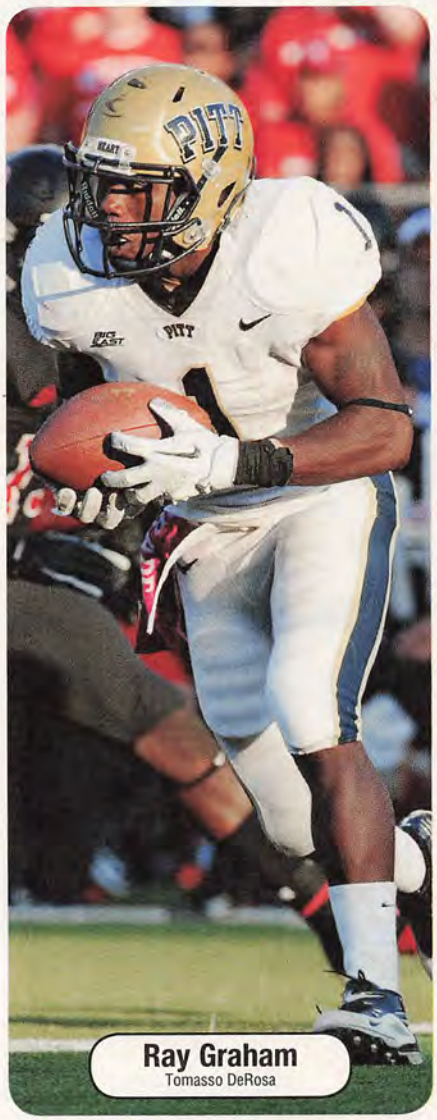
Junior K'Waun Williams will be one of the top corners in the Big East, leading the way for a group that will play much more man and press coverage than last season.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Senior kicker Kevin Harper and junior punter Matt Yoklic are blessed with powerful legs, and they settled in last season as starters.

Harper missed a few field goals early but became almost automatic late; he made 21 of 31 field-goal attempts. He boomed a Heinz Field-record 52-yarder against Cincinnati. Yoklic finished second in the Big East with 41.2 yards per punt.

— Paul Zeise



Ray Graham
Tomasso DeRosa

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2011 stats: 140.3 ypg rushing (3rd Big East/74th NCAA), 209.8 passing (6th/77th), 350.1 total offense (4th/88th), 24.2 ppg (6th/83rd)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Tino Sunseri*	Sr.	Has made 26 starts over last two seasons.	Mark Myers So.
RB	Ray Graham*	Sr.	Star potential, despite coming off major knee injury.	Isaac Bennett, So.
WR	Cam Saddler*	Sr.	Was one of the best players during spring.	Ronald Jones, So.
WR	Devin Street*	Jr.	Should be poised for breakout year as go-to guy.	Salath Williams, Jr.
WR	Mike Shanahan*	Sr.	Big receiver who fits into pro-style offense.	Brenden Felder, So.
TE	Hubie Graham*	Sr.	Traditional tight end with excellent receiving skills.	Drew Carswell, So.
LT	Juantez Hollins	Jr.	Big and moves well.	Justin Virbitsky, Sr.
LG	Chris Jacobson*	Sr.	Should be one of Big East's top linemen.	Arthur Doakes, So.
C	Ryan Turnley*	Sr.	Was perhaps Pitt's most consistent player last year.	Artie Rowell, Fr.
RG	Cory King	Jr.	Started for portions of the 2011 season.	Ryan Schlieper, Jr.
RT	Matt Rotheram	So.	Great size and has plenty of upside potential.	Zenel Demhasaj, Sr.
K	Kevin Harper*	Sr.	Developed into a consistent weapon last year.	Chris Yankoski, Sr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2011 stats: 116.9 ypg rushing (5th Big East/21st NCAA), 233.7 passing (4th/72nd), 350.6 total defense (4th/35th), 22.9 ppg (5th/38th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Bryan Murphy	So.	A good pass rusher who needs experience.	LaQuentin Smith, So.
DT	Aaron Donald*	Jr.	Dominant player against both the pass and run.	Tyrone Ezell, Jr.
DT	Khaynin Mosley-Smith	So.	Explosive player with excellent balance.	Jack Lippert, Jr.
DE	Shayne Hale	Sr.	Has taken the long road to the starting lineup.	T.J. Clemmings, So.
LB	Shane Gordon	Jr.	Big hitter with plenty of speed.	Nicholas Grigsby, So.
LB	Dan Mason	Jr.	Traditional middle linebacker and emotional leader.	Ejuan Price, So.
LB	Todd Thomas*	So.	Versatile player who is excellent in coverage.	Eric Williams, So.
CB	K'Waun Williams*	Jr.	Should be one of Big East's top corners.	Lafayette Pitts, Fr.
CB	Cullen Christian	Fr.	Young player with plenty of potential.	Lloyd Carrington, Fr.
SS	Ray Vinopal	So.	Michigan transfer won the job with a big spring.	Andrew Taglianetti, Sr.
FS	Jarred Holley*	Sr.	Smart, controlled player with great instincts.	Jason Hendricks, Jr.
P	Matt Yoklic*	Jr.	Has a big, booming leg, and he developed consistency.	Mark Myers, So.

*Returning Starter

PANTHERS RECRUITING 2012

rivals.com

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Adam Bisnowaty	OL	6-6	275	✪✪✪✪	Pittsburgh, PA	Fox Chapel Area

Rivals.com rated No. 19 offensive tackle nationally and No. 6 player in Pennsylvania... *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Fabulous 22... *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* Terrific 25... All-State... Three-year starter... Played offensive guard and tackle... Played in All-American Bowl... Helped team to state playoffs as a senior.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Bam Bradley	DB	6-2	200	✪✪✪	Trotwood, OH	Trotwood-Madison

Ranked No. 41 safety nationally and No. 43 player in Ohio by Rivals.com... Two-time All-State... District Defensive Player of the Year... As a senior, had 60 tackles, five interceptions (returning two for touchdowns) and two fumbles recovered... Four-year starter... Helped team to 15-0 record and state championship... Played in All-American Bowl.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Mike Caprara	LB	6-0	210	✪✪	Pittsburgh, PA	Woodland Hills

Set team career record with more than 350 tackles... Three-year starter... Played middle linebacker, fullback and H-back on offense... All-State as a junior... *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Fabulous 22... Had a career-high 122 tackles as a junior... Helped team to four league playoff berths... Played in Big 33 Football Classic.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Trenton Coles	WR	6-3	175	✪✪✪	Clairton, PA	Clairton

Ranked No. 34 player in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com... All-State... Played receiver and defensive back... Helped team to 47-1 record, three league championships and three state championships over final three seasons... As a senior, averaged 19.4 yards per touchdown reception with 21 receptions for 408 yards... Had 96 yards rushing on 16 carries... Scored 80 total points, including nine touchdowns and 26 points after touchdown... Sustained knee injury in state championship game...Member of track and basketball teams... *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* 2010-2011 Male Athlete of the Year.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Chris Davis	ATH	5-9	185	✪✪✪	Austintown, OH	Austintown Fitch

Rivals.com rated No. 33 athlete nationally and No. 40 player in Ohio... All-District... All-League... Played receiver and defensive back... Caught almost 50 passes in final two seasons... Had 748 all-purpose yards as a junior... Helped team to 10-2 record, league championship and division playoffs.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Demitrious Davis	ATH	5-10	183	✪✪✪	Austintown, OH	Austintown Fitch

Ranked No. 32 athlete nationally and No. 39 player in Ohio by Rivals.com... Played in only three games as a senior due to a knee injury... All-State as a junior... District Offensive Player of the Year... League Player of the Year... Had 1,202 yards rushing and 20 touchdowns... Had 1,024 yards passing and 10 touchdowns with only two interceptions, with a completion rate of 62%... Led team to 10-2 record, the league championship and division playoffs.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
JP Holtz	TE	6-4	240	✪✪✪	Pittsburgh, PA	Shaler Area

Rivals.com rated No. 24 player in Pennsylvania... All-State... *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Fabulous 22... *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* Terrific 25... Played running back, receiver, tight end, linebacker and punter... Played quarterback as a freshman... As a senior, had 337 yards rushing and 19 receptions for 332 yards... Scored 15 touchdowns... Selected to play in the Big 33 Football Classic.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Terrell Jackson	DT	6-3	255	✪✪✪	Columbus, OH	Marion Franklin

Ranked No. 45 player in Ohio by Rivals.com... All-State... District Defensive Player of the Year... *The Columbus Dispatch* All-Metro... Had 75 tackles and 20 quarterback sacks as a senior... Selected to play in Ohio High School Football Coaches Association North-South Classic... Helped team to 13-1 record, league championship and state playoffs.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Ryan Lewis	ATH	6-0	185	✪✪✪	Sammamish, WA	Eastlake

All-State... All-Division... As a senior, led all classifications in Washington with more than 1,700 yards... Had 1,706 yards rushing and 25 touchdowns, averaged nearly 9.5 yards per carry... Helped team to 10-2 record and state playoffs.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Jahmahl Pardner	DB	6-1	179	✪✪✪	Rochester, NY	Aquinas Institute

Rivals.com rated No. 9 player in New York... All-State... All-City... Played receiver, defensive back and punt returner... Had 43 receptions for 745 yards and 11 touchdowns as a senior, averaging 17.3 yards per catch... Had 31 tackles, three interceptions, three fumbles recovered, 12 passes broken up and a blocked field goal... Averaged 15 yards per punt return... Scored 76 total points (12 touchdowns and two 2-point conversions).

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Devon Porchia	LB	6-2	200	✪✪✪	Baltimore, MD	Gilman School

Rated No. 20 player in Maryland by Rivals.com... Second-team All-State... *Baltimore Sun* All-Metro... Baltimore Touchdown Club Super 22... Three-year starter... As a senior, had 71 tackles and five quarterback sacks... Helped team to 10-1 record and conference championship... Selected to Chesapeake Bowl... Played in Maryland Crab Bowl All-Star Game.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Darryl Render	DE	6-3	240	✪✪✪	Brook Park, OH	St. Edward

Rivals.com ranked No. 31 strongside defensive end and No. 27 player in Ohio... All-District... Helped team to 8-4 record and state playoffs as a senior... As a junior, helped team to 15-0 record and state championship.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Deaysean Rippy	LB	6-2	198	✪✪✪✪	McKees Rocks, PA	Sto Rox

Rated No. 21 outside linebacker nationally and No. 9 player in Pennsylvania by Rivals.com... All-State... *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Fabulous 22... Big Seven Defensive Player of the Year... Had 46 receptions for 906 yards and 12 touchdowns, averaging 19.7 yards per catch, in final two seasons... Selected to play in the Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Gabe Roberts	OL	6-4	290	✪✪	New London, WI	New London

All-Conference on offense and defense... All-Region on defense... Team Offensive Most Valuable Player... Two-year starter at offensive guard and defensive end.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Rushel Shell	RB	6-0	210	✪✪✪✪	Aliquippa, PA	Hopewell

USA Today All-American... Rivals.com ranked No. 6 running back nationally and No. 2 player in Pennsylvania.... Three-time All-State... Two-time *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* Player of the Year... In four-year career, set state record with 9,078 yards, averaging 8.2 yards per carry... Scored 110 career touchdowns... Broke 36-year national record with 39 consecutive 100-yard games... Rushed for 200 yards or more in 25 games... As a senior, had 2,312 yards rushing and scored 28 touchdowns... The first time he touched the ball as a high school freshman, ran 55 yards for a touchdown... Played in Semper Fidelis All-American Bowl.

Name	Pos	Ht	Wt	Stars	Hometown	School
Chad Voytik	QB	6-1	183	✪✪✪✪	Cleveland, TN	Cleveland

U.S. Army All-American... Rated No. 4 pro-style quarterback nationally and No. 1 player in Tennessee by Rivals.com... Three-year starter... School's all-time leading passer with 5,005 career yards... Had 6,098 career total offensive yards... Had 1,430 yards passing and 10 touchdowns as a senior... Had 438 yards rushing and seven touchdowns... Starting quarterback for East team in U.S. Army All-American Bowl; completed seven of 13 passes for 60 yards and rushed for a nine-yard touchdown.

A LOOK AT THE PANTHERS

RESULTS

	6-7, 4-3	
W	BUFFALO	35-16
W	MAINE	35-29
L	at Iowa	27-31
L	NOTRE DAME	12-15
W	SOUTH FLORIDA	44-17
L	at Rutgers	10-34
L	UTAH	14-26
W	CONNECTICUT	35-20
L	CINCINNATI	23-26
W	at Louisville	21-14
L	at West Virginia	20-21
W	SYRACUSE	33-20
	BBVA Compass Bowl	
L	vs. SMU	6-28

INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING

	Cmp	Att	Int	Pct	Yds	TD
T. Sunseri	247	385	11	64.2	2616	10
T. Anderson	12	33	3	36.4	55	0

RECEIVING

	No.	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg
D. Street	53	754	14.2	2	66
M. Shanahan	39	493	12.6	4	27
R. Graham	30	200	6.7	0	15

RUSHING

	Att.	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
R. Graham	164	958	5.8	9	75
Z. Brown	82	336	4.1	5	36
I. Bennett	58	237	4.1	2	20

DEF. LEADERS

Tackles: M. Gruder 116, J. Holley 67, K. Williams 64
Tackles for loss: A. Donald 16, C. Alecxih 15.5, B. Lindsey 11
Sacks: A. Donald 11, B. Lindsey 8.5, C. Alecxih 6.5
Interceptions: J. Holley 1, K. Williams 1, six tied with 1

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	'11 Record
Sept. 1	YOUNGSTOWN STATE	6-5
Sept. 6	at Cincinnati	10-3
Sept. 15	VIRGINIA TECH	11-3
Sept. 22	at Gardner-Webb	4-7
Oct. 5	at Syracuse	5-7
Oct. 13	LOUISVILLE	7-6
Oct. 20	at Buffalo	3-9
Oct. 27	TEMPLE	9-4
Nov. 3	at Notre Dame	8-5
Nov. 9	at Connecticut	5-7
Nov. 24	RUTGERS	9-4
Dec. 1	at South Florida	5-7

WESTERN MICHIGAN | BRONCOS

MAC rank: 3 **Record: 7-6** **MAC record: 5-3 (3rd, West)** **Stadium: Waldo Stadium (30,200)**

By Jeff Arnold

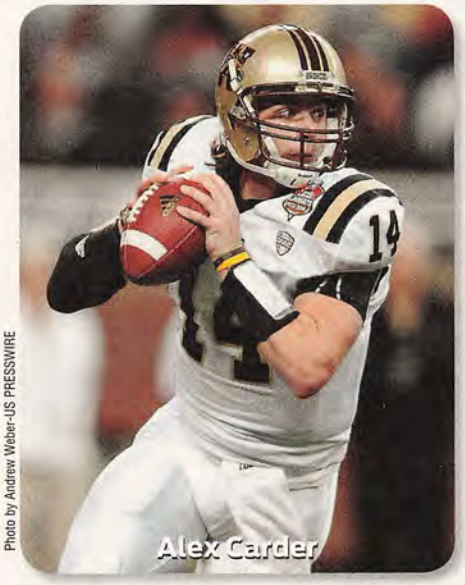


Photo by Andrew Weber-US PRESSWIRE

"The whole defense is thirsty. We all want tackles and we want to make big plays."

— Rover Johnnie Simon

BRONCOS at a GLANCE

COACH: Bill Cubit — At Western Michigan: 47-39, 7 years
OVERALL: 81-57-1, 11 years
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ryan Cubit
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Rich Nagy

LAST LEAGUE TITLE: 1988
LAST TIME DIDN'T GO BOWLING: 2010
RETURNING STARTERS: 11; 5 offense, 6 defense

PLAYERS TO WATCH: QB Alex Carder, RB Brian Fields, WR Eric Monette, DE Paul Hazel, DT Demetris Anderson, ROV Johnnie Simon, CB Donald Celiscar

PRIMARY STRENGTHS: Carder, who has the tools to play at the next level, has four starters on the offensive line to protect him. Monette has the potential to be a featured receiver, but he has to prove he can step into that bigger role and handle being the attention of opposing defenses.
PRIMARY PROBLEMS: Nagy has to find a way to make the most of what he has on defense after losing two key cogs to graduation. Whether younger players can have a big enough impact to make a new scheme work could be a major question mark.

OFFENSE

Senior Alex Carder returns as one of the MAC's top quarterbacks after throwing for 3,873 yards and 31 touchdowns last season.

He had five games with at least 400 passing yards, including 548 — with seven touchdowns — vs. Toledo. Carder has thrown for 7,207 yards in the past two seasons.

The question is: Exactly who he will be throwing to this year?

The Broncos lost 78.7 percent of their receiving production from a year ago, which moves senior receiver Eric Monette into the spotlight after he had 29 catches for 306 yards and a touchdown.

Coach Bill Cubit loaded up on receivers in his 2012 recruiting class, but redshirt freshman Kendrick Roberts and junior Josh Schaffer will have to pick up a lot of the slack. So, too, will junior tight end Clark Mussman.

The Broncos return their entire backfield, helping take some of the focus off the inexperience at receiver. Junior Brian Fields (278 yards, two touchdowns) has a slight edge to assume the starting tailback position, while Tevin Drake and Antoin Scriven also return.

DEFENSE

The task of replacing defensive tackle Drew Nowak — the MAC Defensive Player of the Year — is only the first of the challenges facing the defense.

First-year coordinator Rich Nagy is switching to a 3-3-5 scheme to take advantage of the experience he has in the secondary. Sophomore cornerback Donald Celiscar adds some big-play potential, while returning starting defensive end Paul Hazel will also have an impact.

Junior rover (a linebacker/safety position) Johnnie Simon will also be key, possessing the ability to disrupt offenses from what's likely to be a big-play position for a defense that really took a step backward in the second half of last season. Simon led the Broncos in tackles (114) last year and had 3.5 sacks — numbers he should at least be able to match this season.

Junior Travonte Boles should be able to be more productive at defensive tackle as he replaces Nowak, who had 91 tackles, including 8.5 sacks. The Broncos also must replace a top starter in linebacker Mitch Zajac, giving sophomore Devon Brant and junior Desmond Bozeman more exposure.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Broncos will have first-time starters at kicker and punter. Redshirt freshman Andrew Haldeman replaces a constant performer in John Potter, while freshman J. Schroeder assumes the punting role. The only constant left over from last year is junior long-snapper Kirk Nakama.

OVERVIEW

Following last year's 7-6 season that ended with a Little Caesar's Bowl loss to Purdue, the Broncos start the new year in wait-and-see mode. Success will depend heavily on how quickly Carder establishes rhythm with new receivers and how well the defense responds to the new 3-3-5 system. The defense has to hold up its end of the bargain more than it did last year.

Cubit may have to get some performances from some unexpected sources to keep the Broncos competitive in the MAC West.

TOP NEWCOMER

WR A.J. King – The talented wideout from Florida drew some serious recruiting attention, including from Purdue, and will have a chance in fall camp to make an impact in a receiving corps that was depleted by graduation.

2012 PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE					
QB	14	Alex Carder*	6-2	224	Sr.
RB	20	Brian Fields	5-8	203	Jr.
WR	86	Eric Monette	6-6	201	Sr.
WR	6	Kendrick Roberts	6-3	190	Fr.
WR	82	Josh Schaffer	6-2	211	Jr.
TE	46	Clark Mussman	6-3	232	Jr.
LT	67	Terry Davisson*	6-6	301	Jr.
LG	65	Kasimili Uitalia*	6-2	292	Sr.
C	62	Kevin Galeher*	6-3	300	Sr.
RG	60	Deon Cammock	6-6	342	Jr.
RT	68	Dann O'Neill*	6-8	307	Sr.
DEFENSE					
DE	99	Paul Hazel	6-5	210	Sr.
DT	90	Demetris Anderson	6-3	300	So.
NG	55	Travonte Boles*	6-0	298	Jr.
DE	97	Freddie Bishop*	6-4	253	Sr.
LB	27	Trevor Ishmael	6-1	185	So.
LB	42	Devon Brant*	5-11	219	So.
ROV	3	Johnnie Simon*	6-0	180	Jr.
CB	24	Lewis Toler*	5-10	172	Jr.
CB	34	Donald Celiscar	5-11	175	So.
SS	2	Demetrius Pettway*	5-10	188	Jr.
FS	33	Justin Currie	6-3	192	So.
SPECIAL TEAMS					
K	57	Andrew Haldeman	5-10	165	Fr.
P	N/A	J. Schroeder	6-1	205	Fr.

* Returning Starters in Bold

2012 SCHEDULE

Sept. 1	at Illinois
Sept. 8	EASTERN ILLINOIS
Sept. 15	at Minnesota
Sept. 22	CONNECTICUT
Sept. 29	TOLEDO
Oct. 6	MASSACHUSETTS
Oct. 13	at Ball State
Oct. 20	at Kent State
Oct. 27	NORTHERN ILLINOIS
Nov. 3	at Central Michigan
Nov. 10	at Buffalo
Nov. 17	EASTERN MICHIGAN

2011 RESULTS

L	at Michigan	10-34
W	NICHOLLS STATE	38-7
W	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	44-14
L	at Illinois	20-23
W	at Connecticut	38-31
W	BOWLING GREEN	45-21
L	at Northern Illinois	22-51
L	at Eastern Michigan	10-14
W	BALL STATE	45-35
L	at Toledo	63-66
W	at Miami (OH)	24-21
W	AKRON	68-19
	Little Caesars Bowl	
L	vs. Purdue	32-37

2011 RANKINGS

OFFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring Offense	35.3	18
Rushing Offense	121.2	94
Passing Offense	337.3	8
Total Offense	458.5	19

DEFENSE	PER GAME	RANK
Scoring Defense	28.7	76
Rushing Defense	219.7	109
Pass Defense	215.0	47
Total Defense	434.7	99

TO MARGIN	PER GAME	RANK
-3	-0.23	80

PICKING **THE MAC**

In QB-driven MAC, Passers Determine Parity vs. Parody

The Mid-American Conference hasn't been immune to the conference shuffle. The league thought it would have two seven-team divisions when Massachusetts joined as part of its move into the Football Bowl Subdivision, but Temple made a dash back to the Big East in March.

The Owls leave after finishing among the top three in the East Division in each of the last four years, but there are still plenty of top-notch teams gunning for the conference title.

Defending champ Northern Illinois, which staged a magnificent rally to claim its first MAC title since 1983, heads into the 2012 season with the nation's longest winning streak (nine games). But the Huskies don't go into the season with league MVP Chandler Harnish, who was chosen as "Mr. Irrelevant" in the 2012 NFL Draft.

NIU might not miss Harnish as much as everyone expects. Junior Jordan Lynch, who ran almost exclusively when he subbed for Harnish the last two seasons, threw for 402 yards and four touchdowns against the second-stringers in the team's spring game.

Ohio, the East Division winner last year, accomplished almost everything on its plate last season. Frank Solich's crew earned the school's first bowl win and posted 10 victories for the first time since 1968, but the Bobcats couldn't hold on to their 20-0 halftime lead in the MAC title game.

Ohio has an excellent chance to deliver the school's first MAC title since 1968 as it retains eight defensive starters as well as 2011 third-team All-MAC quarterback Tyler Tettleton (3,960 total yards with 38 touchdowns).

Tettleton isn't the MAC's top returnee when it comes to total offense. Western Michigan gunslinger Alex Carder is back after throwing for 3,873 yards and 31 touchdowns and rushing for 630 yards and four touchdowns, though All-American wideout Jordan White and his 140 receptions have graduated.

Miami senior Zac Dysert (3,513 passing yards, 23 touchdowns) and Central Michigan senior Ryan Radcliff (3,286 passing yards, 25 touchdowns) also return.

And for those football-starved fans who became enraptured while watching Toledo put up 60-plus points on Tuesday nights in November, new Rockets head coach Matt Campbell (the 32-year-old former offensive coordinator who moved up when Tim Beckman took over at Illinois) welcomes back two-headed quarterback monster Austin Dantin and Terrance Owens.

Campbell isn't the league's only new coach. Terry Bowden, who hasn't coached at the FBS level since going 47-17-1 at Auburn from 1993-98, takes over at Akron. Bowden posted a 29-9 record at Division II North Alabama before replacing Rob Ianello as the Zips boss.

— Jeff Reynolds

MAC Conference Picks

EAST	Good news	Bad news	Our call
1. Ohio	Frank Solich says this could be his best defense in nine years at Ohio.	The Bobcats could use a go-to receiver to replace sixth-round pick LaVon Brazill.	Look for Ohio to be at Ford Field on Nov. 30.
2. Kent State	The Golden Flashes welcome back 18 starters from a team that won four of its last five.	What's the saying? If you have two QBs (Spencer Keith/David Fisher), you don't have one?	It's time for Kent State's second winning record in the past 25 years.
3. Miami (Ohio)	Zac Dysert and Nick Harwell (97 catches) are the league's best passing combo.	The offensive line needs an upgrade to protect Dysert and aid run game.	RedHawks get closer to 2010 MAC title form, but not enough to challenge for East.
4. Bowling Green	Loaded offense features QB Matt Schilz and 2011 Frosh of Year RB Anthon Samuels.	Must rely on too many young and/or inexperienced linebackers and defensive backs.	Going to be tough to avoid third straight losing season (first such stretch since 1995-2000).
5. Buffalo	MAC No. 2 rusher Branden Oliver (1,395 yards, 13 TDs) has four returning OL.	New DC Lou Tepper needs several more guys like LB Khalil Mack (20.5 TFLs).	If Bulls treat all foes equally (they beat Ohio and lost to NIU by 1), they'll reach .500.
6. Akron	Stephen F. Austin transfer Dalton Williams threw for 373 yards in spring game.	The Zips are woefully short in quality linemen on both sides of the ball.	Terry Bowden has discovered this can't be a quick fix.
7. Massachusetts	The 1998 Division I-AA champion joins the FBS ranks this year.	New coach Charley Molnar, a pass-game wizard, has precious few vets at the skill positions.	The Minutemen need time to make the jump from the FCS.
WEST			
1. Western Michigan	QB Alex Carder is a wondrous thrower who'll be fine with relatively young WRs.	Many defenders are high-risk/high-reward types.	Broncos get NIU and Toledo at home, so this could be the year.
2. Northern Illinois	Stellar defense includes MLB Devon Butler (missed 2011 after near-fatal gunshot wound).	Huskies must replace four studly offensive linemen.	No shocker at all if NIU makes its third consecutive MAC title-game appearance.
3. Toledo	National top 10 offense retains QBs Terrance Owens and Austin Dantin.	Offense doesn't return Eric Page (125 catches) or RB Adonis Thomas (1,071 yards).	Rockets challenge for West title if new DC Tom Matukewicz (from NIU) has immediate impact.
4. Ball State	QB Keith Henning has veteran O-line and solid skill players around him.	Cards lost two All-MAC performers from one of nation's worst defenses.	Agonizingly close to bowl bid ... but no cigar.
5. Eastern Michigan	All five O-linemen and most top runners (including Dominique Sherrer) are back.	The defense needs to take another quantum leap to become competitive.	Not quite time for school's first bowl bid since 1987.
6. Central Michigan	Senior QB Ryan Radcliff and WR Cody Wilson lead competent offense.	MAC's worst defense will only improve so much with injured players back in fold.	Chippewas need time to jell, but there's a brutal early slate (MSU, Iowa, NIU, Toledo).

Lindy's 2012 ALL-MAC Team

OFFENSE - FIRST TEAM			
QB	Alex Carder	Sr.	Western Michigan
RB	Branden Oliver	Jr.	Buffalo
RB	Anthon Samuel	So.	Bowling Green
WR	Nick Harwell	Jr.	Miami (Ohio)
WR	Perez Ashford	Sr.	Northern Illinois
TE	Garrett Hoskins	Sr.	Eastern Michigan
C	Zac Kerin	Jr.	Toledo
OL	Jordan Hansel	Jr.	Ball State
OL	Brian Winters	Sr.	Kent State
OL	Eric Herman	Sr.	Ohio
OL	Dann O'Neill	Sr.	Western Michigan
AP	BooBoo Gates	Jr.	Bowling Green
K	Matthew Sims	Jr.	Northern Illinois
DEFENSE - FIRST TEAM			
DL	Roosevelt Nix	Jr.	Kent State
DL	Sean Progar	Sr.	Northern Illinois
DL	Chris Jones	Sr.	Bowling Green
DL	Tremayne Scott	Sr.	Ohio
LB	C.J. Malauulu	So.	Kent State
LB	Dwayne Woods	Sr.	Bowling Green
LB	Khalil Mack	Jr.	Buffalo
DB	Dayonne Nunley	Jr.	Miami (Ohio)
DB	Jahleel Addae	Sr.	Central Michigan
DB	Johnnie Simon	Jr.	Western Michigan
DB	Jimmie Ward	Jr.	Northern Illinois
P	Brian Schmiedebusch	Jr.	Bowling Green
OFFENSE - SECOND TEAM			
QB	Tyler Tettleton	Jr.	Ohio
RB	Jahwan Edwards	So.	Ball State
RB	Jawon Chisholm	So.	Akron
WR	Titus Davis	So.	Central Michigan
WR	Cody Wilson	Jr.	Central Michigan
WR	Alex Neutz	Jr.	Buffalo
C	J.D. Bales	Sr.	Ohio
OL	Eric Fisher	Sr.	Central Michigan
OL	Logan Pegram	Sr.	Northern Illinois
OL	Greg Mancz	So.	Toledo
OL	Korey Neal	Sr.	Eastern Michigan
AP	Jamill Smith	Jr.	Ball State
K	Matt Weller	Sr.	Ohio
DEFENSE - SECOND TEAM			
DL	Austin Brown	Sr.	Miami (Ohio)
DL	Paul Hazel	Sr.	Western Michigan
DL	Nate Ollie	Jr.	Ball State
DL	Freddie Bishop	Sr.	Western Michigan
LB	Dan Molls	Sr.	Toledo
LB	Travis Freeman	Sr.	Ball State
LB	Justin Kudworth	Sr.	Eastern Michigan
DB	Marlon Pollard	Jr.	Eastern Michigan
DB	Jordan Haden	So.	Toledo
DB	Travis Carrie	Jr.	Ohio
DB	Luke Wollett	Jr.	Kent State
P	Scott Kovanda	Sr.	Ball State

THE BIG ONES

Sept. 1	Ohio at Penn State
Sept. 1	Northern Illinois vs. Iowa (Chicago)
Sept. 1	Western Michigan at Illinois
Sept. 8	Kent State at Kentucky
Sept. 15	Western Michigan at Minnesota
Sept. 15	Miami (Ohio) at Boise State
Sept. 22	Kansas at Northern Illinois
Oct. 20	Western Michigan at Kent State
Oct. 20	Cincinnati at Toledo
Oct. 27	Northern Illinois at Western Michigan
Oct. 27	Kent State at Rutgers
Nov. 14	Toledo at Northern Illinois
Nov. 14	Ohio at Ball State
Nov. 20	Akron at Toledo
Nov. 23	Ohio at Kent State

BOWL CONNECTIONS

Champion	GoDaddy.com Bowl vs. Sun Belt
MAC #2	Little Caesar's Pizza vs. Big Ten
MAC #3	Drove Humanitarian Bowl vs. WAC

NOTE: The MAC has agreements with New Mexico and BBVA Compass Bowl, if those conferences don't fill their guaranteed spots with other conferences.

TOP 10 NFL TALENT

1. Alex Carder	QB	Sr.	Western Michigan	Sturdy build, accuracy, steady improvement get him drafted.
2. Dann O'Neill	LT	Sr.	Western Michigan	Former OG is light on his feet; top 15 OT entering 2012.
3. Dwayne Woods	ILB	Sr.	Bowling Green	At 220 pounds, could be looked at as safety/ST demon.
4. Sean Progar	DE	Sr.	Northern Illinois	NFL size at right end, beats one-on-one blocking.
5. Dan Molls	LB	Sr.	Toledo	Production is there. Biggest question will be timed speed.
6. Tremayne Scott	DE	Sr.	Ohio	Tall, long and lean; candidate for 3-4 OLB?
7. Chris Jones	DT	Sr.	Bowling Green	Power end or rotational defensive tackle with high motor.
8. Matt Weller	K	Sr.	Ohio	Plenty of leg — consistency, kickoff length keep him on fringe.
9. Nick Speller	OL	Sr.	Massachusetts	Unproven against elite talent; upside intrigues scouts.
10. Perez Ashford	WR	Sr.	Northern Illinois	Speed, hands and return skills to get a look in camp.

Most Valuable Player	Offensive Player of the Year	Defensive Player of the Year	Newcomer of the Year
Tyler Tettleton QB, Ohio	Branden Oliver RB, Buffalo	Roosevelt Nix DL, Kent State	Jordan Haden FS, Toledo

HONOR ROLL

Most accurate passer	Alex Carder	Western Michigan
Strongest arm	Matt Schilz	Bowling Green
Best scrambler	Alex Gillett	Eastern Michigan
Coolest in the clutch	Tyler Tettleton	Ohio
Toughest to bring down	Jahwan Edwards	Ball State
Best hands	Nick Harwell	Miami (Ohio)
Most dangerous deep threat	Bernard Reedy	Toledo
Best run blocker	Dann O'Neill	Western Michigan
Best pass blocker	Brian Winters	Kent State
Best cover corner	Travis Carrie	Ohio
Best pass rusher	Roosevelt Nix	Kent State
Special teams demon	BooBoo Gates	Bowling Green

CINCINNATI BEARCATS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Bajakian | **DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Jancek** | **STADIUM: Nippert Stadium; 35,000**

AT A GLANCE

2011:
10-3, 5-2 Big East (T-1st)

COACH:
Butch Jones — At Cincinnati: 14-11, 2 years; overall: 41-24, 5 years

RETURNING STARTERS:
14; 5 offense, 7 defense, punter, kicker

PLAYERS TO WATCH:
QB Munchie Legaux, RB Jameel Poteat, WR Anthony McClung, WR Kenbrell Thompkins, DE Walter Stewart, DE Dan Giordano, LB Maalik Bomar, SS Drew Frey

PRIMARY STRENGTHS:
On defense, the Bearcats are set at the end positions, at weakside linebacker with Bomar and at strong safety with Frey. On offense, McClung could be a budding star at wide receiver, but only if Legaux improves his passing accuracy. Special teams could be an area of strength.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:
Legaux has not proven he can excel at quarterback over an entire season or conduct the offense at the level of excellence that Zach Collaros did. There is no go-to running back to start the season, and young players have to blossom on offense.

KEY LOSSES:
QB Zach Collaros, RB Isaiah Pead, DT Derek Wolfe, LB J.K. Schaffer

OVERVIEW:
On paper, this is not a team that should challenge for a Big East title, but the league is down and the Bearcats have proven in recent years that they're capable of overachieving. For that to happen, Legaux will have to make huge strides, and the defense will have to carry a sizeable burden, especially early in the season while the offense searches for its identity.

New-Look Bearcats Aim to Stay at Top of Big East

Butch Jones put together one of the best turnaround jobs in the country last year, when he led Cincinnati to a share of the Big East championship after the Bearcats went 4-8 in his first year.

He did it with a run-dominated offense and an improved, opportunistic defense. After the season, he was named Big East Coach of the Year and signed an extension that keeps him under contract through 2017.

But Cincinnati suffered major losses with the departure of running back Isaiah Pead, the Big East Offensive Player of the Year; defensive tackle Derek Wolfe, the Big East co-Defensive Player of the Year, and quarterback Zach Collaros, who was a first-team All-Big East selection as a junior.

All three of those players were Brian Kelly recruits. Now it falls to Jones to replace them with his own guys.

Working strongly in Jones' favor is a soft schedule. The non-league portion includes two games against opponents from the Football Championship Subdivision and two games against Mid-American Conference opponents.

The Bearcats have four of their seven Big East games at home, and with West Virginia having departed the league for the Big 12, one of the league's toughest opponents is no longer a concern. The Mountaineers have been replaced by Temple, hardly the force that once greeted Big East teams in Morgantown.

"The expectations and standards for us never change," Jones said. "Do we have a lot of new faces? Yes. But that adds to the level of excitement."

OFFENSE

Cincinnati finished spring practice with the starting quarterback job still officially unclaimed, but junior Munchie Legaux is the likely starter, with the frequently injured Brendon Kay nominally in competition.

Legaux started three games late last season in place of injured Zach Collaros, completing 55 of 116 passes for 749 yards, with five touchdowns and four interceptions.

Legaux must improve his footwork to keep passes from sailing, but he's more athletic than Collaros and a serious threat as a runner. Legaux seemed overwhelmed at times in the games he started, but he appeared more confident and in control during spring practice.

"I feel like it's my time," Legaux said. "I put in the work. I have the playbook down pat. I have the trust and confidence of my teammates and coaches. Now it's time to go out and execute."

Of immediate concern is finding a replacement for Pead, who led the Big East in rushing last year.

Senior George Winn, the primary backup running back last year, is listed with the first team. But the long-term solution more likely will come from two sophomores: Jameel Poteat, who was the jewel of the 2011 recruiting class; and Ralph David Abernathy IV, who made a mark last year as a kick returner. Junior college transfer Aaron Harris could also be a factor.

At least at first, Jones plans to use a running back-by-committee approach and will probably pass more frequently, with the goal to spread the ball more equally among all of his playmakers.

The receiving corps now includes Jordan Luallen, a converted quarterback who proved to be an effective runner when he had the chance to run the offense in 2011. He has been moved to slot receiver, but will still see spot duty at quarterback in certain formations.

Junior Anthony McClung, who caught

49 passes for 683 yards and six touchdowns last year, returns at wide receiver. The Bearcats are hoping for more production from senior Kenbrell Thompkins.

DEFENSE

John Jancek, who shared coordinator duties last year with Tim Banks (off to Illinois), will now run the defense, promising to maintain the approach that saw the Bearcats rise from last to third in the Big East in scoring defense. They led the league with a plus-12 turnover margin, which helped compensate for a porous pass defense.

Cincinnati lost two of the best defensive players in school history in tackle Derek Wolfe and middle linebacker J.K. Schaffer. The coaching staff is confident it has talented, young players ready to step in and assume bigger roles to fill those gaps. The problem, as it often is with this program, is a lack of depth.

"We have the pieces of the puzzle," Jancek said. "We just have to continue to get better. There's not a lot of experience after that first group. That's just the reality of it."

The leader of the defense will be sixth-year senior strong safety Drew Frey, a first-team All-Big East selection last season. Sophomore Solomon Tentman will step into Schaffer's spot at middle linebacker after a long, grueling recovery from a knee injury. Maalik Bomar is solid and athletic at weakside linebacker.

The Bearcats have proven ends in seniors Walter Stewart and Dan Giordano. Junior Jordan Stepp, who played well in a backup role last year, is also set to help compensate for the loss of Wolfe.

SPECIAL TEAMS

There is a lot of potential here for a unit that could be a major factor in Cincinnati's success.

Punter Patrick O'Donnell led the Big East last year with a 43.8-yard average. Placekicker Tony Miliano has room to improve after a freshman season in which he missed three extra points and eight field-goal attempts. Four of those errant field-goal attempts were from beyond 40 yards. His longest make was from 48 yards.

The return game, which was a problem in 2010, received a boost from Ralph David Abernathy IV, who finished second in the league in kickoff returns with a 26.5-yard average. He returned a kick 90 yards for a touchdown in the Liberty Bowl against Vanderbilt.

Cincinnati continues to struggle to find someone who can change field position with a punt return. Abernathy will get his chance this season.

— Bill Koch

Anthony McClung
Photo by Jim Owens/Icon SMI

SCOUTING REPORT: Offense

2011 stats: 178.5 ypg rushing (2nd in Big East/37th in NCAA), 207.6 ypg passing (7th/78th), 386.1 ypg total offense, (3rd, 61st) 33.3 ppg (2nd/26th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
QB	Munchie Legaux	Jr.	Talented, but needs to improve accuracy.	Brendon Kay, Sr.
RB	George Winn	Sr.	Gained 219 yards last season as a backup.	Jameel Poteat, So.
WR	Anthony McClung*	Jr.	Leading returning receiver with 49 catches.	Jordan Luallen, Jr.
WR	Kenbrell Thompkins*	Sr.	Coming off a disappointing season.	Chris Moore, Fr.
WR	Alex Chisum	So.	Showed great promise as a freshman.	Damon Julian, Sr.
TE	Travis Kelce	Sr.	Shared position last year with Adrien Robinson.	Demetrius Richardson, Sr.
LT	Eric Lefeld*	So.	Played well after injury forced him into lineup.	Cory Keebler, So.
LG	Austen Bujnoch*	Jr.	Returning starter provides stability on line.	Daniel Murray, Fr.
C	Dan Sprague	Jr.	Third starter in as many years at center.	Sam Longo, Jr.
RG	Kevin Schloemer	So.	Earned job with strong spring.	Sean McClellan, Jr.
RT	Sean Hooey*	Sr.	Junior season was marred by injury.	Parker Ehinger, Fr.
K	Tony Miliano*	So.	Needs to improve consistency.	A.J. Fleak, Fr.

*Returning Starter

SCOUTING REPORT: Defense

2011 stats: 96.2 ypg rushing (2nd in Big East/6th in NCAA), 261.2 ypg passing (7th/99th), 357.4 ypg total defense (6th/42nd), 20.0 ppg (3rd/20th)

POS	STARTER	YR.	COMMENT	BACKUP/KEY DEPTH
DE	Walter Stewart*	Sr.	Has ability to be a dominant pass rusher.	Brandon Mills, Sr.
DT	Cameron Beard	So.	One of the newcomers who must step up.	Mitch Meador, Jr.
DT	Jordan Stepp	Jr.	Played well in a backup role last year.	Mitch Meador, Jr.
DE	Dan Giordano*	Sr.	Has all-conference potential.	Silverberry Mouhon, Fr.
LB	Maalik Bomar*	Sr.	Will be one of the leaders on defense.	Dwight Jackson, So.
LB	Solomon Tentman	So.	Fully recovered from major knee injury.	Greg Blair, Sr.
LB	Nick Temple*	So.	Emerged as a starter in his freshman year.	Corey Mason, So.
CB	Deven Drane*	Jr.	Made great strides as a sophomore.	Trenier Orr, Fr.
CB	Camerron Cheatham*	Sr.	Solid, steady; a two-year starter.	Dominique Battle, Sr.
SS	Drew Frey*	Sr.	First-team all-conference as junior.	Adrian Witty, So.
FS	Arryn Chenault	Jr.	Another new starter in key position.	Malcolm Murray, Sr.
P	Pat O'Donnell*	Jr.	Blossomed into the best punter in league.	John Lloyd, So.

*Returning Starter

A LOOK BACK

5 Years Ago: 2007

Ohio State spent much of the season atop the polls, owing to another of its gritty defenses and workmanlike offenses. Quarterback Todd Boeckman and running back Beanie Wells led the offense, while Vernon Gholston and James Laurinaitis starred on defense en route to a 10-0 start. A stumble against Illinois left the Buckeyes down at No. 7 in the polls, but amazingly, all six teams ahead of them lost in the final three weeks, putting Jim Tressel's team back in the national championship game for the second year in a row — and the third time in six years.

Big Ten Champion: Ohio State (11-2, 7-1)

Big Ten Players of the Year: Rashard Mendenhall, RB, Illinois; James Laurinaitis, LB, Ohio State

Heisman Trophy: Tim Tebow, QB, Florida; no Big Ten players in top 10.

National Champion: In the BCS title game, OSU came out on fire, taking a quick 10-0 lead before LSU swamped the Buckeyes, just as Florida did the previous year. The Tigers rolled to 31 consecutive points en route to a 38-24 victory and its second title in five years.

10 Years Ago: 2002

Carson Palmer

Photo by Stephen Dunn/Getty Images

This season wasn't so much about the games that were played — but the one that went unplayed. Ohio State and Iowa matched victories all through the league season, but Iowa's 36-31 loss to Iowa State helped to settle things. OSU was unbeaten, so the second-ranked Buckeyes and their precocious freshman RB Maurice Clarett advanced to the BCS Championship Game in the Fiesta Bowl, where they came up aces for their first consensus national title since 1968 and seventh overall in school history.

Big Ten Champion: Ohio State (14-0, 8-0) and Iowa (11-2, 8-0)

Big Ten Players of the Year: Brad Banks, QB, Iowa; Michael Doss, DB, Ohio State.

Heisman Trophy: Carson Palmer, QB, USC; Banks was 2nd.

National Champion: Jim Tressel's Buckeyes were heavy underdogs, but they shocked top-ranked Miami in the Fiesta Bowl, 31-24, in double-overtime after getting a controversial pass interference penalty to go their way at the end of the first overtime.

15 Years Ago: 1997

Michigan was coming off its second fifth-place finish in four years, but the Wolverines roared to their first national title in 50 years. Lloyd Carr's team used a sensational defense, led by do-everything Charles Woodson, and a whatever-it-takes offense, led by unheralded senior quarterback Brian Griese, to win the Big Ten's first national championship since 1968.

Big Ten Champion: Michigan (12-0, 8-0)

Big Ten Players of the Year: Charles Woodson, DB/WR/RS, Michigan; Curtis Enis, RB, Penn State

Heisman Trophy: Woodson became the first predominantly defensive player to win the award, edging Tennessee QB Peyton Manning in one of the closest and most surprising votes ever. Curtis Enis, RB, Penn State, 5th; Tim Dwight, WR/KR, Iowa, 7th.

National Champion: Michigan (AP poll) beat Washington State in the Rose Bowl, 21-16; Nebraska (13-0, coaches poll) beat Tennessee in the Orange, 42-17.

20 Years Ago: 1992

Gino Torretta

Photo By US PRESSWIRE

One of the most offensively powerful Michigan teams of all time crushed nine opponents and outlasted Washington in one of the wildest Rose Bowls ever played (38-31) ... but somehow was tied three times along the way. Ties against Notre Dame (17-17), Illinois (22-22) and Ohio State (13-13) kept this undefeated team from perfection, even though the Wolverines averaged more than five touchdowns a game. With Elvis Grbac, the most efficient passer in NCAA history to that point, and Tyrone Wheatley, the Big Ten rushing leader, this was UM's fifth consecutive season of at least sharing the Big Ten title.

Big Ten Champion: Michigan (9-0-3, 6-0-2)

Big Ten Players of the Year: Tyrone Wheatley, RB, Michigan; Steve Tovar, LB, Ohio State

Heisman Trophy: Gino Torretta, QB, Miami; no Big Ten players in top 10.

National Champion: Alabama won its seventh official national title by thrashing heavily favored Miami, 34-13. The Tide hammered the Heisman Trophy-winning Torretta and snapped the Hurricanes' 29-game winning streak.

25 Years Ago: 1987

The rest of the Big Ten caught up with Michigan and Ohio State in the 1980s, with Michigan State becoming the fifth different team in as many years to capture the league championship (following Illinois, Ohio State, Iowa and Michigan; Wisconsin was still laying in wait for its 1990s rise). Coach George Perles, tireless tailback Lorenzo White, and the nation's second-ranked defense made it look easy in '87 ... but it wasn't *that* easy. The Spartans haven't found their way back to Pasadena since then.

Big Ten Champion: Michigan State (9-2-1, 7-0-1)

Big Ten Player of the Year: Lorenzo White, RB, Michigan State

Heisman Trophy: Tim Brown, WR/RS, Notre Dame. White was 4th.

National Champion: No. 2 Miami (12-0) beat No. 1 Oklahoma in the winner-take-all Orange Bowl, 20-14.

50 Years Ago: 1962

Ohio State started the season No. 1, and Michigan State and Purdue were also in the Top 10; Northwestern would eventually rise to No. 1 in the polls. But by the end of the season, there were the Wisconsin Badgers rising to an 8-1 record behind can-do quarterback Ron Vander Kelen and All-American tight end Pat Richter. They rose to No. 2 in the polls, and faced top-ranked USC in the one of the greatest Rose Bowl matchups, and games, ever.

Big Ten Champion: Wisconsin (6-1, 8-2)

Big Ten Player of the Year: Ron Vander Kelen, QB, Wisconsin

Heisman Trophy: Terry Baker, QB, Oregon State. Bobby Bell, T, Minnesota, 3rd; Pat Richter, E, Wisconsin, 6th.

National Champion: The polls closed at the end of the regular season, but this was the first time No. 1 had ever faced No. 2 in a bowl game, and the game didn't disappoint: Vander Kelen passed for a record 401 yards, but the Trojans prevailed, 42-37.

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